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EMX300 SUPREMO BRAD ANDERSON
AND THE GL12 YAMAHA
© HAGGIS HARTMAN

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TIM GAJSER WHIPS OUT A PHAT ONE
FOR THE MATTERLEY BASIN MASSIVE
© RAY ARCHER



C O N T E N T S

COMMENT

The weekend of the British GP is always a fairly special time for me and this year's Matterley Basin bash was no different. Because I was unable to travel down to the race until Sunday morning I woke up nice n' early so I could be on the road for five am with a 265-mile journey ahead of me.

Even with a brief nappy-snooze thrown in and the essential Team DBR stop for a McDonalds Double Sausage and Egg McMuffin breakfast I made it to Winchester in double-quick time to catch most of the action.

Admittedly I did miss Brad Ando picking up the EMX300 overall but I bumped into him more or less straight away anyway and he filled me in on his epic victory! It's a good job Ando's an early riser like me or else the result could've been very different – I mean, an 8:50am start for a GP moto? Screw that...

The action came thick n' fast all day long after that with EMX250, EMX150, EMX125, MX2 and MXGP race action keeping the fans on their toes right up until six pm – or near as damn it.

Unless I missed it somehow there was never a dull moment and each an every moto was action packed with some real heroics from the Brit pack battlers. Young Taylor Hammal was my standout star in the EMX125 division while Steven Clarke definitely impressed in the EMX250 class by fending off Darian Sanayei to take a well deserved overall victory.

Conrad Mewse was obviously the big surprise in MX2 – almost as big a surprise as Max Anstie not really finding Saturday's qualifying heat winning speed again – while Jake Nicholls and Tommy Searle kept their end up in the 450 class. All in all it was a pretty stellar weekend for UK passport holders and hopefully all you fans who made it to Matterley too.

Although it probably goes unnoticed by the majority – as it should when you're investing in tickets for an event like this – there's a hell of a lot of work goes into making it all happen. I hate to think how much Health & Safety bullsh*t Steve Dixon and the team had to go through in order to tick the boxes but I'm glad they did. Cheers Steve, Bradley, Leah and all...

Making the marshals wear protective headgear and safety glasses was probably a step too far although I believe this was an FIM directive they're testing out at various grands prix this summer. However, it seems a bit daft to enforce this rule when the FIM workers – who frequently get closer to the action than the volunteer flag waving team – only rock cotton caps n' sunnies.

The marshals at these events sometimes come under fire from the public and riders for not doing a great job – and we've all seen incidents where things have escalated quickly due to a lack of action from the flaggies – but this year's bunch seemed super diligent, fast acting and effective. Well done guys – you were awesome!

But the folks who make this GP the absolute best race in the world are the fans because without you then us media and industry folk would be witnessing the world's fastest dirt bike riders race round in a quiet, empty field and I don't think even super-commentators Roger Warren and Paul Hardy could get excited about that!

So, each and every one of you who made it to Matterley and hung over the fences, cheering on your favourites deserve a reward so sit back in your favourite chair, put your feet up and enjoy the rest of this month's mag. It's made with just as much passion for motocross as you guys and girls showed all weekend at the British GP...

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TONY

CAIROLI



ANOTHER INJURY TESTS OUR PROTAGONIST'S PATIENCE BUT DON'T EXPECT HIM TO GIVE UP ANY TIME SOON...

Sometimes I have good news and sometimes I don't but what remains consistent is the fact that this has been a strange season so far! I've had many ups and downs and it all started with a heavy crash in Sardinia during the winter which meant the beginning of the season was a bit tougher than I'd been hoping for.

But then things got better and in Argentina I was back on the podium. After that we went to Mexico which turned out to be the second downer of the year for me – I just can't explain what went wrong. After that I worked hard though and the next three races went pretty well with three podiums and two victories.

Spain was a pretty bad weekend and I was disappointed because of a hard crash. Fortunately I was lucky enough to come back home with no injuries because I went down pretty hard as I was following and trying to pass Clement Desalle. In both motos I had decent gates but in the second I wasn't able to get the start I wanted and coming back on that sort of track can be really hard. It was a shame because I like the Talavera track – it's where I won my first race with the KTM 450 last year.

By France I began to feel well again and it's another track that usually suits my style. I'll never forget the awesome battle I had with Gautier Paulin in 2013 when I won there in front of the French crowd! This year I was third in the first moto but unfortunately I was involved in a crash at the start of the second moto that put me out of the race and so I was unable to fight for the podium.

My best and worst race was in Great Britain on the awesome Matterley Basin circuit where

I have so many good and intense memories. It was there that I won one of the most difficult races of my life back in 2014 after my father passed away the week before. I also won my seventh World title there back in 2013 and it was at Matterley I won one of the best races of my life.

It was way back in 2006 with my little Yamaha 250. It was September and the rain was pouring down. There was mud everywhere but the track was rideable and one of the most fantastic editions of the Motocross of Nations went down. In the second moto – MX2/Open – I won on my 250 beating both the Americans and many more top riders. That day Italy finished fourth by just two points! It was a big shame not to be on the box but the past is the past as they say!

Back to the present day and this year the track was marvellous as usual with some rain coming in the days before the race. The jumps are incredible and it was very enjoyable to ride. I had a good qualifying race – even if I did have a small crash in a corner – and a very good first moto with a holeshot and a solid second place finish.

Unfortunately in race two I injured my left wrist when I landed heavily on the big quad jump. I was sure that I would not be able to finish the race and that I would have to stop but then lap after lap it began feeling a little bit better and so I decided to keep going to collect some important points.

I could feel the wrist swelling and when I saw my shirt tighten on my arm I realised that something was wrong. I'm not sure what is going on and hopefully the doctors will tell me

soon what the problem is and if it's serious or not. I have been able or lucky enough to be clear from bad injuries almost all my career and it's frustrating when you know you have the potential to be there fighting for something bigger but you can't.

Before my knee injury in 2008 when I was leading the series and cruising towards my third title in MX2 I never had any problems and since that one it was a further seven years before my next big injury – in Maggiora last year. It's not easy but injuries happen a lot in motocross. It just sucks more this time because it has happened just before Mantova – my home Grand Prix – and it's been a long time since I didn't ride in that.

After that race – the 12th of 18 GPs this year – we will have almost a one month break to rest and prepare for the second part of the season. It will be important to sort out my injury and come back stronger because as you know I never give up – it's not in my DNA! Keep in touch and hopefully I'll have better news next time!

A presto amici (see you soon friends!)
TC222



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BRYAN

MACKENZIE



IRN BRY DOES A JAKE NICHOLLS AND TOTALLY FAILS TO GET HIS COLUMN IN ON TIME —
SO HERE'S A PICTURE OF HIM STOOD ON A VAN INSTEAD . . .

Ryan Mackenzie
#121

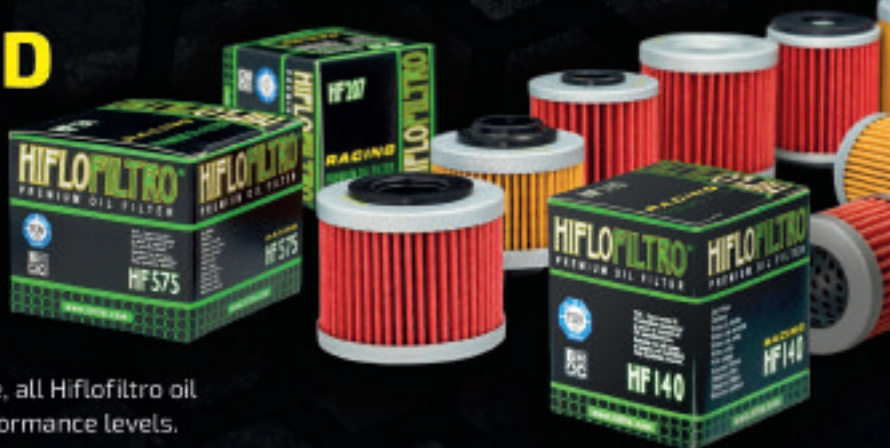
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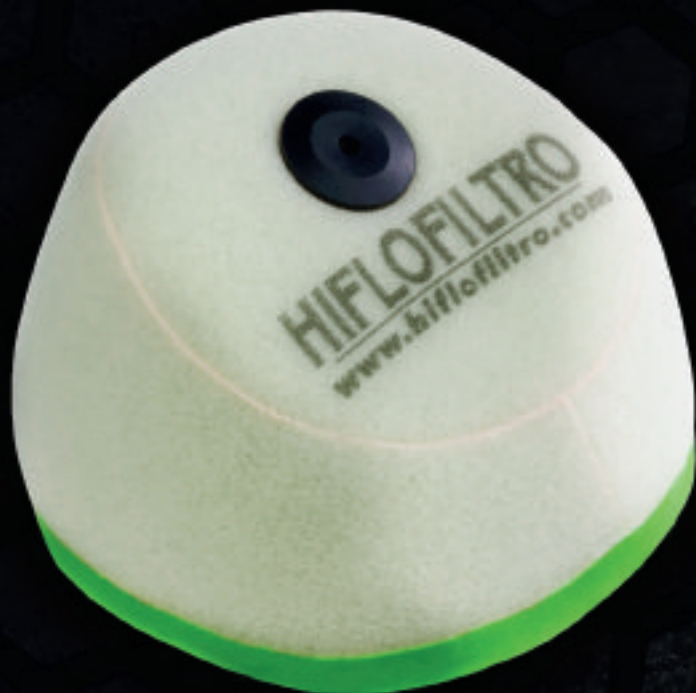


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STEVE

HOLCOMBE



WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH OUR STEVE GETS GOING, WRAPPING UP A DOUBLE OUTRIGHT WIN AT THE ENDUROGP SERIES IN SWEDEN...

Well, it's been one hell of a month. I've raced, walked, driven, sailed and flown more miles in four weeks than I think I did during the whole of 2015. But it's been amazing. I've enjoyed two hugely successful and enjoyable world championship races in Finland and Sweden and got my first double outright GP win.

Long before this year's world championship season started I knew that the Finnish and Swedish rounds of the series would be super important. And they were. They're pretty much unlike any kind of terrain I ride on anywhere else in the world and as they marked the passing of the half way point of the series, well, that just added extra importance to getting the job done right in Scandinavia.

To make sure I was ready I decided to head to Finland early, to get a good seven days of riding under my belt before I needed to start walking special tests. It was absolutely the right thing to do. I stayed in Jamsa in Finland – home to many of Finland's best enduro racers, including former world champion Petri Silvan. The tracks he has to ride on are out of this world. I was joined by a number of other riders – some Finnish, some not – and we had a blast. Hard riding by day, lots of laughs by night.

Although the solo-drive from Italy to Finland was a bit boring – the 29-hour ferry crossing was seriously dull – once in Finland the next two weeks were all go. And apart from an unwanted technical issue on day two in Finland everything went every bit as well as I'd hoped.

My good results at the opening rounds of the series gave me the confidence to approach the

races knowing what I was capable of doing. And for the large part I was able to keep on doing it. Day one in Finland went well, first in Enduro 3 and second outright. Day two should have been the same or a little better but I had a small technical issue that resulted in me losing some time and finishing down the results. Despite the issue I held onto my lead in the E3 championship.

Sweden is a race that I won't forget for a long, long time. It was one of those races where I felt great, just got on with things and the results came my way. To give Beta their first ever double EnduroGP victory, having earlier given them their first EnduroGP day win, was an awesome feeling. Importantly, I was able gain back some of the championship points I lost in Finland.

To say the Swedish event was tough is a huge understatement. I felt like I'd been run over by a tank the Monday after the race. With tight time controls, a gnarly, long enduro test and having hit the ground pretty hard a few times, I was more than pleased to see the end of the event. But I was most pleased with is that I managed to win the second day when it went down to the very last test of the day.

I was a few seconds ahead as I'd lost most of my advantage with two crashes on the enduro test, and managed to stay ahead. I gave the final test everything, let it all hang out, and managed to stay upright to get the win. It's fair to say that I was a sore but happy camper heading to the airport that night.

A few weeks back I announced that I'd withdrawn my name from the British ISDE selection squad, ahead of this year's event in

Spain. While I know it was the right decision for me, it certainly wasn't an easy one to make. I'm a huge fan of the event, and fully intend to compete in the coming years. Just not this year. I mulled it over for weeks and weeks and finally decided to give the event a miss.

I'm guessing that some people might think that opting to not represent your country is a strange decision and I get that. But there's a lot to consider when it comes to the Six Days.

Firstly, the Enduro World Championship is my absolute focus this year. More now than ever before. The ISDE is a long way off but to do the job right there's a lot of preparation that needs to be started months before the race. On top of world championship goals there's also the British Enduro Championship that I'm fully committed to.

From what I'm hearing the four-rider British Trophy team that'll represent GB will be a very strong one – possibly strong enough to fight for the win. And I certainly hope they can. But like I've said my focus is very much on trying to secure my first world championship title, which rolls onto Spain and Italy in the coming weeks. It's certainly all go, go, go at the moment.

Ciao,
Steve

Holcombe #70



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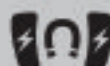
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DANIEL

GROVE

DAN STARTS OFF BY TAKING THE PISS OUT OF JUSTIN BIEBER'S HAIRCUT AND THEN SLAGS EVERYONE OFF FOR, ER, TAKING THE PISS OUT OF JUSTIN BIEBER!

A few weeks back Chad Reed Instagrammed a photo that he jokingly said was two of his Fox Racing team-mates. I genuinely had no idea who they were at the time and didn't think too much of it as there was clearly an underlying joke that I wasn't in on.

It turns out that it was Lewis Hamilton and Justin Bieber. Hamilton had a steely look going on whereas Bieber had a blond rinse that reminded me of Eminem wannabes back when he burst onto the scene in 1999/2000 with the very same hair do.

I found out who it was by scrolling through the comments and then I twigged who it was. Some of the comments were mind-blowing – racism and sexism included – but the general theme running through nearly every comment was how ridiculous they looked. These comments – obviously not all were of the hatred variety – clearly came from people that are into motocross as people outside the sport wouldn't know if they looked like a world champion or a newbie.

They both had body armour and full riding gear on as well as helmets so it's not like they were pulling wheelies through city centres or riding without lids somewhere illegal. What they're doing in the photo won't have had a negative effect on motocross that's for sure.

After establishing who the chaps in the photo were I thought I'd have a search for them on Instagram as Chad hadn't tagged them and, as I don't follow either, I wanted to see if they'd posted this photo as well. Sure enough, Hamilton had and ol' Biebs had n'all plus an additional photo of him posing with the same bike – a Yamaha WR250F from around 2005 I reckon. So it's pretty obvious that Yamaha wasn't involved in this otherwise it would have

had a new bike delivered to the photoshoot within hours.

There aren't actually any photos of these two riding the bikes and I honestly don't reckon they actually did as I've no doubt that whatever contracts they have in their chosen professions, off-road motorcycling isn't permitted as there's just too much on the line for them should they go and injure themselves. Sure, Bieber has had a chequered past but if any of us had half the fame and the money that he's got – and bear in mind he's still only 22 – we'd have all lost our way a little in one way or another. Obviously, I don't condone drink driving but the rest of the allegations seem to be just 'made for media' or wild accusations from the public after a bit of fame for themselves and some cash in the bank for selling their story. Bloody hell, I sound like a Belieber!

Shortly after Reed's post, social media was full of photoshopped images of themselves and Bieber, including some important industry folk which I found even more baffling.

Can you imagine if the original photo that was posted on Hamilton's and Bieber's timelines was to gauge the reaction to see how their fans took it? Maybe they each have an interest in looking to invest in the sport in one way or another? It's not like they're short on cash and if they like riding bikes – if they actually rode them – then why should they be hated on for posing in riding gear with dirt bikes?

From another angle, between them they have 74 million followers. If just one per cent of those were to buy a dirt bike after seeing their idol with one the sport would be transformed – although I doubt there are even 740,000 bikes on the market for sale, new and used combined, worldwide.

At the time of writing there had been a combined 'like' total across Hamilton's and Bieber's photos of over three million – which doesn't include those who just saw it – and the comments had reached over 40,000. No doubt this is the biggest reaction to a dirt bike post ever and as it was used in a good way it's not detrimental to the sport in any way. No doubt Fox Racing will have seen a spike in sales over the last few weeks...

I've no idea why they came in for such a slating after reading some of the comments – especially because if you clearly don't like someone or what they do, why follow them and go to the effort of telling them? Surely these people have air filters to clean?

In summary – and I know it's hard for some people to grasp and sadly this will never change – but we shouldn't hate on anyone getting involved in off-road motorcycling, whether they don't know the first thing about it or if they're filthy rich. The more people that own a bike and buy all the gear and parts that they need means there will be a benefit to everyone...

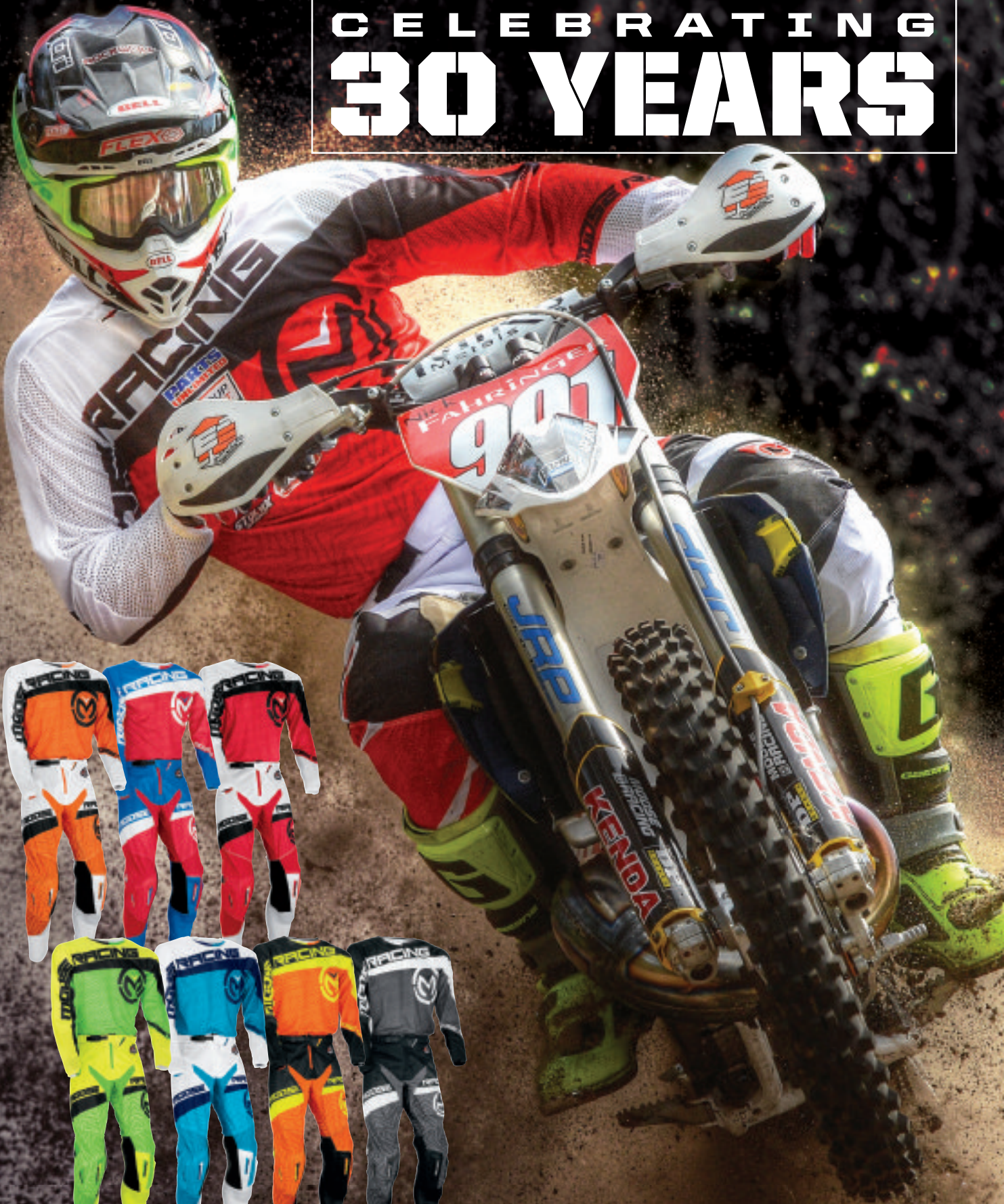
Just because your new gear matches your new bike doesn't make you a better person than someone starting out on a 10-year-old bike and wearing mismatched riding gear. When people feel the need to call others out on social media with detrimental comments – and there's no way that they'd say some of these things to their faces – it's the lamest thing I think I'll ever come across in life.

And when it's done from behind a made-up name, well, their parents must be so proud of having a troll for a son or daughter...

Daniel Grove

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NICHOLLS

DESPITE A SETBACK OR TWO IT PRETTY MUCH SEEMS LIKE YAK IS BACK ON TRACK TO NAILING DOWN THAT TOP 10 GP FINISH...

We're past the halfway mark of the season now and I'm miffed to say I still haven't had a top 10 in a GP this year yet. I've been getting close but so far no cigar. I had a good weekend down near Madrid at Talavera, the old-school GP track from years ago. I qualified seventh which is my best race so far this season after gating reasonably well and getting myself into sixth early on. I passed Desalle and rode forward for the first 10 minutes, running sixth until the penultimate corner where Cairoli got me.

It gave me a good boost of confidence though, knowing that I can run that pace. It wasn't until I saw a few photos from the race that I realised the quality of riders that were behind me the whole time.

On Sunday the track sped up a fair bit as there was a threat of rain so they let it dry up slightly and I struggled like mad with gearing in the first race. Fighting with factory bikes that could pull third in every turn, I was chopping between gears and working overtime to keep with them and still managed a 13th. We changed the gearing for the second race which was better but I had the most bizarre crash while in 10th on the first lap.

On approach to the third consecutive big jump of the back straight my throttle hand came completely away from the bars as I started braking which chucked all my weight over the front as I took off. With no throttle to bring the front up in the air it meant a trip over the bars and a weird 180 when the front wheel touched the ground. This flung me off the track so, luckily, everybody missed me.

I got up a bit shaken as the crash seemed to go on for about 10 minutes, what with wrestling the front end frantically with one hand during the biggest tank slapper ever while my right hand was down by the forks doing a mackerel impression. I got up a long way behind and pushed hard all race to get 20th at the flag and the final point.

The following week in St Jean was a weird

one. I just can't seem to get out of the gate at that track – strange start gate they have there. In the opener I was last around the first turn but came through to 13th and in the second one I had a better start and was running 10th early on when a stone smashed the side of my motor, throwing a ton of oil over my boot, so I pulled in rather than destroy the engine and put myself at risk. Pretty frustrating!

Desertmartin the next Sunday was pretty cool and I picked up my first MX1 overall win which felt nice. I never really pushed my limit all day as I kind of never needed to. I didn't jump the triple out the back which upset me a bit but on the approach to it I always felt like I was in the wrong gear whatever I tried. I was being a pussy basically but in the end I didn't need to do it. Bit of a silly jump though as there was no room for error.

I was all chuffed when I got off the bike after the second race knowing I'd won the overall until Ian Browne told me that my hire car's rear window had been smashed by a stone – gutted, especially as I hadn't taken insurance out on the old girl. So £400 later that was sorted – pants down!

The best thing about the weekend was getting off the plane at Stansted late Sunday night and not having to queue at passport control – made my day that did!

The week leading up to Matterley my old team-mate Romain Febvre was supposed to come and stay for the week and practice with me but he bailed as the weather looked bad. I tried to tell him we needed the rain but he didn't change his mind. Then Ben Townley was going to come over for the week but he bailed too as Everts wouldn't let him!

So it was down to the old faithful riding crew to keep doing what we've been doing. The rain dodged us too and we had a mint week riding.

I've got really used to packing a backpack with the bare minimum in it, then hopping in my car at 4am each Friday and flying to a race – so to have to pack our whole camper up seemed like a right ordeal on the Friday morning before

Matterley. It's safe to say I'm fully over the camper thing. They're just a ball ache – always going wrong, expensive to run and the driving sucks especially as no-one can help you out if they don't have a lorry licence.

I was getting wound up on the way to the track. I still can't understand why when I sit at 65mph I pass cars like they're going out of fashion and in 50mph average speed sections people think they'd better do 40!

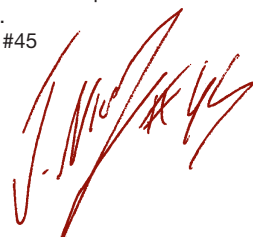
The British GP is always one of the highlights of the year for me though and I'm especially excited each time to ride that track as I love it – although this year I thought it sucked. The jumps were all rank, too steep and crappy landings everywhere. I was like an old man on Monday with my back and it also seemed extra quick this year. I did still kind of enjoy it, although I never got my bike how I wanted it and was using far too much energy to go quick.

An 11th in the first one after a couple of good battles with Reedy was cool. In the second race I got a good start and was going way better, then Tixier snuck by after I had to run over a fallen Guillod. As he passed me he moved over on the take-off of a jump and I just lost it – I saw red so bad. I've never liked the bloke anyway but, man, I lost it.


A couple of corners later I was too eager on the gas before I'd even sat down into the rut, the next minute I'm upside down and winded with the front-end on top of me. I was too far back at that point and the margins in the track are far too fine to get back into the points, plus I was still so wound up I was gonna crash again.

Got to keep my head down and ride hard and smart to get in the top 10 from now on. Cheers for reading.

Go hard #45



NEWSHOUND

A full-page background image of a motocross rider, Adam Sterry, in mid-air during a race. He is wearing a yellow and blue racing suit with 'WILVO' and 'VIRUS' logos, and a helmet with a red and yellow design. His motorcycle is orange and black with the number '811' on the front. Another rider is visible in the background.

*Adam Sterry wins his maiden
Maxxis overall at Desertmartin*

JOIN US ON A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF THE OFF-ROAD UNIVERSE . . .

The British GP was a little doozy. Great track, so-so weather, no off-track drama to speak of showing the football fans of the world how we get together for a world class event and to top it all off a sh*t-ton of British success.

Ando, Ando, Ando, oi, oi, oi! Brad Anderson is now kicking ass in the EMX300 series after a slow start to the season which was hampered with bike problems. The fan favourite – and this month's cover star – has been clawing his way back the lost ground and won the Spanish and British rounds courtesy of a couple of 1-2s. With only a couple of rounds remaining he needs some luck on his side to win the title as the two ahead of him are super consistent, but, in outright speed Ando has it covered.

2014 EMX250 champ and current Maxxis British Championship MX2 red plate holder Stevie Clarke decided four days prior to the British round of the MXGP series that he felt like riding the EMX250 class at Matterley – because

the track looked sick in the pictures. After a quick rustle up of parts, product, a mechanic (because his had already made plans for his 30th birthday that weekend) and the small matter of an entry, Clarke was a late addition to the event but the first finisher as he took the spoils in front of a home crowd to strike one off his bucket list – to stand on top of a GP podium in Britain. Good job, mate.

And then we move on to Conrad Mewse. Young Con has improved at an unbelievable rate – in just two weeks! After taking the opening round of the EMX250 by dominating the competition, the Factory Husky team for which he rides decided to pump him up into MX2, ready or not. For a while there it was looking like a bad move as the young Brit failed to make any impact and scored only one point in his first four GPs. But, then, all of a sudden, Mewse came out of nowhere in France to land an eighth and backed it up with one of the most impressive rides of the weekend when he rode to fifth in the opening race and to a solid ninth

in race two. Conrad's confidence will be sky high now and I expect he shall feature up front far more often.

And did I see that the MXoN is expected back to the UK in 2019 at Matterley Basin? Yup! The short term plan for the Nations is Italy this year, USA next (Glen Helen), Assen in '18 and good old Blighty in 2019. I don't know if we just do it better in general, or it's because we know more people in the pits with it being on our doorstep but I've always found the home MXoN's the most enjoyable ones. Put it in the calendar now, gents, three and a bit years is plenty of notice so there's no way you can miss it for a holiday, someone's birthday party, your own wedding or even a zombie apocalypse. It'll be epic.

I noticed while watching the MXGP that the track marshals were all searing hard hats that are more usually worn on building sites. I looked into why and found that the FIM are trying to – in a less flattering fashion – follow the lead of the Monster Energy Supercross series

TEAM TORQUE!

WATSON, MCCANNEYS AND KNIGHTER HEAD BRITISH ISDE EFFORT

Great Britain has announced both its World and Junior Trophy teams for this year's ISDE in Spain. The Trophy team – reduced to four for 2016 – will be Nathan Watson, Danny McCanney, Jamie McCanney and David Knight. The three-man Junior team will feature Jack Edmondson, Lee Sealey and Josh Gotts.

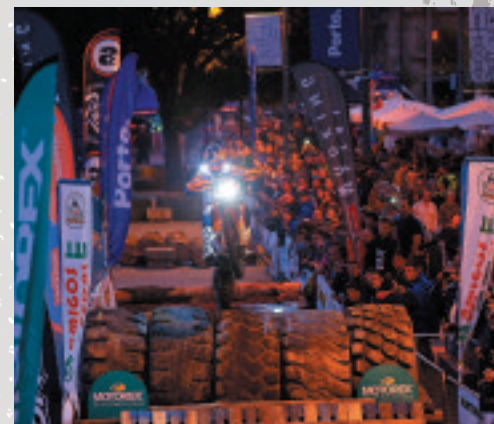
Unfortunately the squad won't feature Steve Holcombe as he's opted not to compete this year.

"As it is our Trophy team share seven world titles between them and while Nathan Watson is brand new to the sport he's already a world championship podium finisher," told team manager Dusty Martin. "The energy and the potential in our Junior team is excellent, too, these three youngsters have been contesting world championship rounds this year and again we've seen podium finishes."

Steven Clarke tops the EMX250 podium at Matterley Basin

Conrad Mewse nails his first top five finish in MX2

James Hutchinson takes a digger at Desertmartin



ALFREDO ON TOP! GOMEZ GRABS LAGARES HAT TRICK

KTM's Alfredo Gomez has secured his Extreme XL Lagares hat trick with victory in this year's Portuguese Hard Enduro race. The Spaniard was on top form during the three-day event kicking things off with a dominant ride in the City Scramble Prologue in downtown Porto before going on to win the event outright.

Husqvarna's Mario Roman was the closest challenger to Gomez. Second in the prologue, Roman won Saturday's time trial before ending Sunday's main event as runner-up. Third overall went to Sherco's Wade Young.

by forcing the marshals to wear safety helmets. Apparently they're trial running it at select GPs this year before making it mandatory for '17. Hmmm, interesting.

Casualty to our UK shore and not having a fairytale weekend was reigning MXGP Champion Romain Febvre who likely won't be retaining the MXGP crown in 2016 unofficially-official. As if it wasn't hard enough retaining the championship with a hyped up teenager running amok and kicking ass more often than he has, an accidental collision with Ben Townley in the qualifying heat put Febvre in the dirt and out of the GP with a concussion and broken finger. Febvre was/is the only one that can live with Gajser at the moment and in his absence the already championship leader, Gajser, extended his points lead with a max haul.

I'm not for a second brushing over the fact of how good Tim Gajser is at the moment though – he is actually unbelievable and arguably the fastest motocrosser in the world right now with perhaps only Febvre, Herlings and Roczen

the only two guys running knobbly tyres in the world that could throw the dice with reigning MX2 champion. One of those match ups will be realised later this year too as the MXGP champion elect is set to showcase his indoor skills at Monster Cup – as will Roczen. It's no secret that Gajser has his eyes set Stateside in the future and with a 74 point lead in the MXGP championship after 11 rounds the odds are the title will go back to Slovenia with him and then I expect he will race in the US next year.

Sadly the nation's favourite Shug Simpson is having a nightmare with a broken hand. In case you didn't know Shaun wasn't just having a bad day at Matterley – he was having a tough day dealing with a seriously sore paw. The big jumps of Matterley Basin were just too much for the reigning British champ and he rode safely to collect what he could in a commendable effort. Good effort, san.

Did you notice that the Dixon Racing Team was absent from the MX2 line-up? DRT's Russian rider Vsevolod Brylyakov was MIA for

the same reason he hasn't competed at any Maxxis events this year – visa issues, bro.

It's a pleasure to see Jake Nicholls finding his form again. After a couple of years of bad luck with injuries since his impressive last two seasons on an MX2 bike, Jake has been finding his feet in the MX1 class slowly but surely this year and it has culminated in his maiden Maxxis British Championship MX1 class win at round four, Desertmartin. I was surprised too that Jake hadn't yet won an MX1 overall until that point but it's evident that his form is on the up as his GP results are steadily picking up too and he is on the verge of cracking the top-10. If his progression this season is anything to go by it would be happening anytime now.

Who would believe that Sterry hadn't won a Maxxis MX2 overall until Desertmartin recently either. Sterry has been a pain in every MX2 rider's ass for a couple of seasons now as he improves rapidly and is one of the strongest 250F riders in the UK. So it was surprising to learn that Ireland too was his first time to the

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Jane Daniels is kicking ass in the Women's class



Nev Bradshaw's currently sidelined by an artery disorder

top step in the championship. At GPs he's improving, also. A quick starter, Sterry just needs to polish up his end game a little and I dare say he'll be finishing in the top six come the end of the world tour.

Have you noticed that Nev Bradshaw isn't the same bear-hunting-honey-badgering-badass that he is renowned for being this season? Well, as it turns out, Nev has been feeling out of sorts so went for blood tests recently which diagnosed him with an artery disorder which could potentially need surgery. The usually super-fit South African has been struggling down the stretch of a moto this year which would usually be his strength so explored the fatigue symptoms which led him to this point and has forced him to sit out until he is back to full fitness.

Long-time British championship privateer James Hutchinson was having a blinder in this year's British championship. A prodigy as a nipper, James has blazing speed and a nut-sack full of raw talent but has never found the last piece of the puzzle until recently. Tearing it up at Hawkstone well inside the top-10 of the MX1 class, The Hutch went to Desertmartin guns blazing.

Unfortunately, it all went Pete Tong 30 seconds into his day though as he crashed literally a quarter of a lap into practice as a deep rut on a jump face dragged his feet from his bike resulting in a big crash and a broken C6 vertebra (that's at the neck end). The injury required pins and plates and seven weeks in a neck brace and he still isn't sure of his future beyond that. Let's hope Hutchy makes a full

recovery and can get back to the level he was at before Desertmartin.

Last bit from me... If you're a social media addict and let's face it most of us are follow this guy that I found on Twitter last month for some laughs – @SchoolboyDad. I don't know who it is but I think that's the point. However he passes some pretty strong opinions and is fairly comical with it. Entertainment value is high.

It's been a cracking month for British enduro riders abroad. Domination of Erzberg, wins in EnduroGP and Janie Daniels beating Laia Sanz not once but three times! With results like that, it's safe to say it's been a bloody good June.

Man of the month is without question Graham Jarvis. Just when you think the 41-year-old is slowing down, he goes and knocks it out of the park once more and leaves everyone guilty in questioning whether Grimbo has still got it or not.

Dominating Erzberg's Red Bull Hare Scramble, Jarvis didn't just destroy the competition he pretty much destroyed the Iron Giant with his performance. Winning the race by a whopping 33 minutes no one really got a look in. Toying with his rivals during the first 30 minutes, Jarvis ramped things up a notch when the tough stuff came at them hard and fast. Bloody brilliant doesn't do it enough justice.

Proving himself as a future heir to Grimbo's crown – that's if he ever lets go – is Billy Bolt. Another trials ex-pat turned Hard Enduro convert Bolt rocked up to Erzberg having spent only a couple of months riding an enduro bike. Only 18 and a half – he's still young enough to

count half birthdays – Bolt ripped his way from a second row start to fifth overall. Passing 46 riders along the way and overcoming a midway mechanical that involved the removal of his swingarm he tore his way up the final Lazy Noon climb passing guys like Taddy Blazusiak along the way. Under the watchful eye of Julian Stevens, Bolt is one to watch.

In EnduroGP circles, the double header in Finland and Sweden threw out all manner and mean of surprises. When all was said and done Sherco's Matt Phillips still holds the red plate but Steve Holcombe is rapidly closing in. A double outright EnduroGP win in Sweden marked his third victory of 2016 moving him to within 21 points of Phillips, while another three Enduro 3 wins sees him lead Johnny Aubert by 15 points.

Nathan Watson is another fast learner that's quickly rising to the top. The EnduroGP rookie has firmly left his MXGP past behind by securing his debut Enduro 1 in Sweden. After six straight runner-up finishes to Eero Remes, Watson finally beat the Finn in conditions far removed from any MXGP circuit. He's fourth overall in EnduroGP too. Improving with each round, Husqvarna's Danny McCanney is third overall in E1.

The Women's Cup finally got underway in Finland and Sweden and it proved worth the wait with Jane Daniels leading the way. While Laia Sanz is normally the rider to beat, Daniels tore up the form book to blast her way to three wins from four starts. Eight points in front she's got Sanz rattled.





MONSTER SLAM!

2017 ARENACROSS TOUR DATES ANNOUNCED...

The 2017 Monster Energy Arenacross Tour dates have been announced for a seven-round series at a selection of the UK's most popular arenas.

Kicking off on Saturday January 7 at the Manchester Arena, the tour will visit Glasgow, Birmingham, Belfast and Sheffield with the grand finale again firing up the nation's capital city at The SSE Arena in Wembley, London. Each venue will host a single Saturday evening performance with the exception being Belfast which will be a Friday and Saturday evening double-header.

The hot news though is that, as an ever-evolving series, the Arenacross Tour will continue to push the boundaries next year and extend its reach into Europe. The final of the seven-round UK championship at Wembley on February 18 will also serve as the first round of the 2017 Monster Energy European Arenacross Tour, with a four-round series taking in London, Spain, France and Holland.

"Who would have thought that just four years ago the UK would have the strongest

indoor Motocross series in Europe with over 50,000 fans attending?" asks E22 boss Matt Bates. "I'm massively proud of what we've achieved so far but all I can say is that this is just the beginning – I believe we have a massive future! As our indoor tour works its way in to Europe next March I'm set on making sure we develop both the riders' rewards, team support and take the entertainment of AX to a whole new level."

The 2016 Monster Energy Arenacross Tour was nothing short of amazing but what lies ahead for 2017? We know there are scores to be settled. Will Ramette and Soubeyras return and take up where they left off? Will Chatfield, Matt Bayliss or Jack Brunell lead the charge for the British and stem the French onslaught? Will any of the American hotshots prove to be great and actually run with and beat the Europeans?

There's only one way to find out and 2017 Arenacross tickets are on sale now via The Ticket Factory and the individual Arena box offices. Visit www.arenacrossuk.com for further information.



WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN! WIN!WIN!

TORC1 PARTS PACKAGE WORTH £175

Rapid Distribution have been building up a killer range of off-road brands down there at their Somerset HQ which includes legendary product producers like Axo, Bel-Ray, Virus Racing and more including relatively new US brand Torc1. On the subject of Torc1 they're currently working flat out on making their parts arsenal bigger and better and their range now includes handlebars, grips, levers, shifters, brake pedals, foot pegs and even donuts (but not the edible ones).

To celebrate the awesomeness of the ever growing Torc1 stable of products we've team up with the good folks at Rapid Distribution to offer each and every DBR reader the chance to win a Torc1 parts

package for their own bike. The kit will include a Motion brake pedal, Attack OS (oversize) taper bars, a Reaction gear shifter, MX grips and finally some grip donuts (not edible ones).

To enter this amazing competition all you need to do is download the Dirt Bike Rider news app from either Google Play or the Apple App Store and then turn on push notifications before July 20. That's the day the competition will go live and we'll send out a notification when it does. Open it up, fill in the form and hit transmit before the closing date of July 28.

To see the full range of Torc1 products head online to www.torc1racing.co.uk...





WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN! WIN!WIN!

A SEVEN-DAY SOCAL RIDING EXPERIENCE FOR TWO WITH KURT NICOLL



He's a bona fide British motocross legend, a GP winning icon and an MX des Nations demigod and now you could win a week-long riding experience in Southern California with seven-time ACU national champion and four-time world 500cc runner-up Kurt Nicoll.

We've teamed up with Kurt and his brand-new Champion MX California Vacation company to offer one lucky reader and a friend a prize package worth a whopping £2500 and, what's more, included are two tickets to the 2016 Monster Energy MXGP of USA at Glen Helen on September 11.

The lucky winner and his or her bestie will arrive on September 5 for a seven-day, seven-night MX holiday of a lifetime with four days riding at four different tracks.

To enter this amazing competition all you need to do is download the Dirt Bike Rider news app from either Google Play or the Apple App Store and then turn on push notifications before July 15. That's the day the competition will go live and we'll send out a notification when it does. Open it up, fill in the form and hit transmit before the closing date of July 28. And don't forget, you can increase your chances of winning by getting the mate you'd like to take to download the app and enter n'all – cunning, huh?

Terms and conditions...
Entrants must be aged 18 or over
The prize is based on two people sharing a room for seven nights
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This prize is non-transferable and must be utilised by the winner



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- such as Chaparral Superstore and Factory Supercross test tracks (subject to availability)
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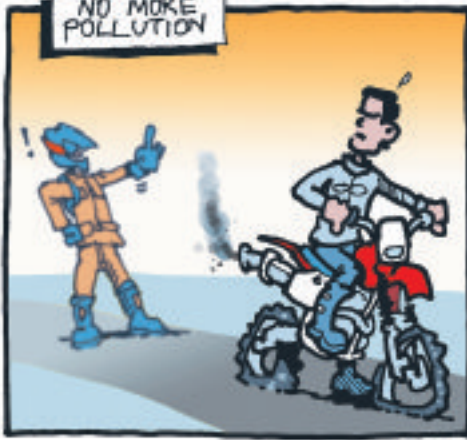
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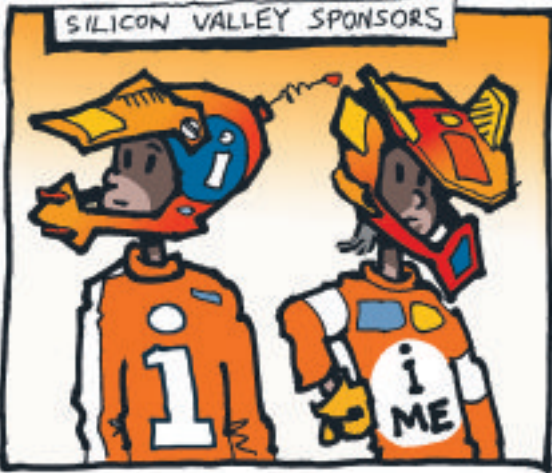
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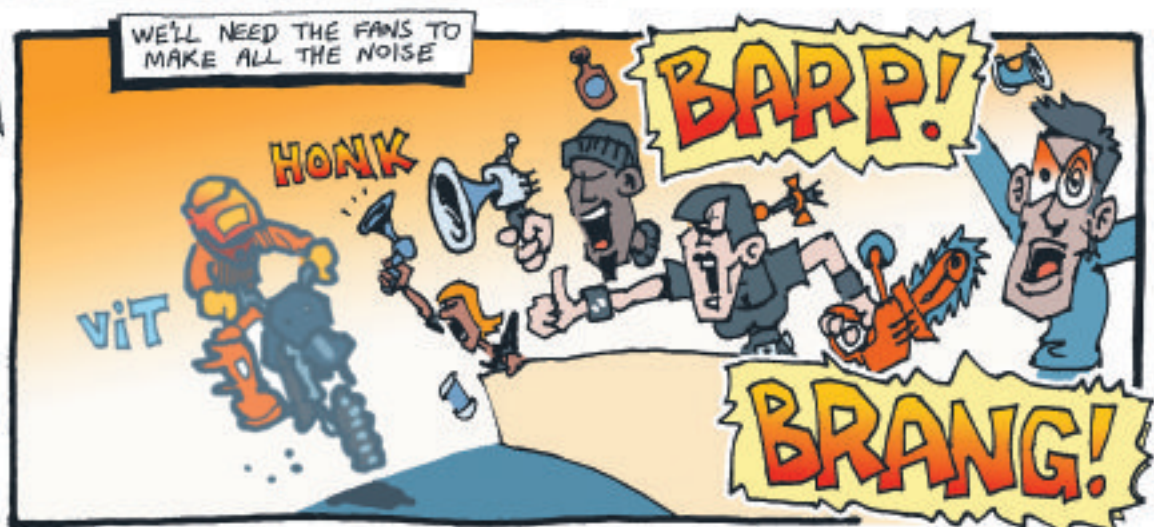
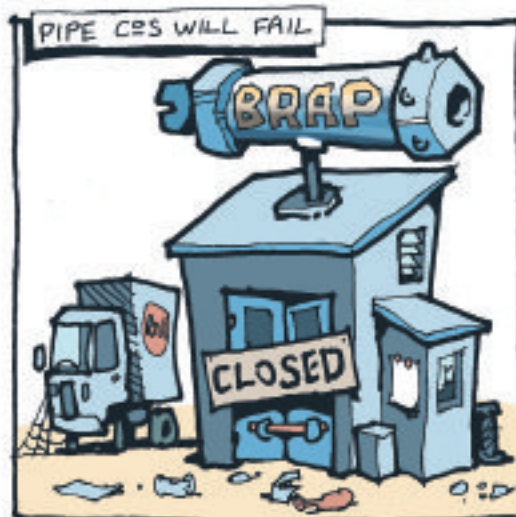
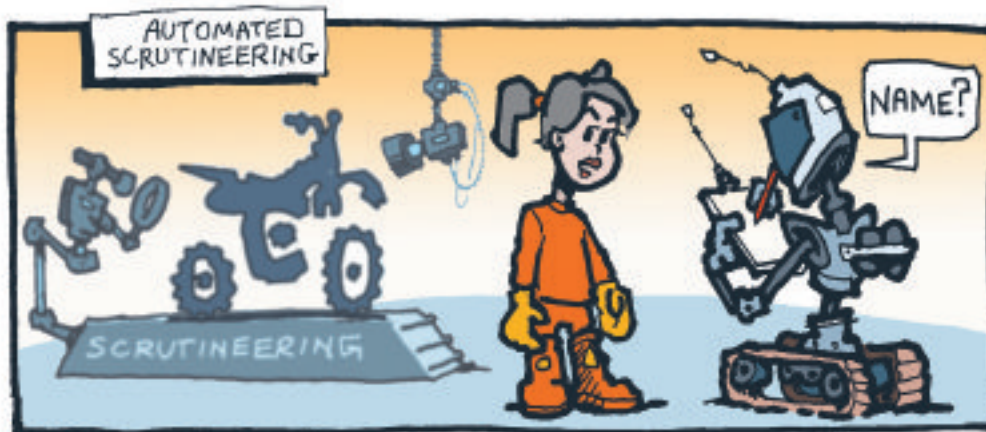


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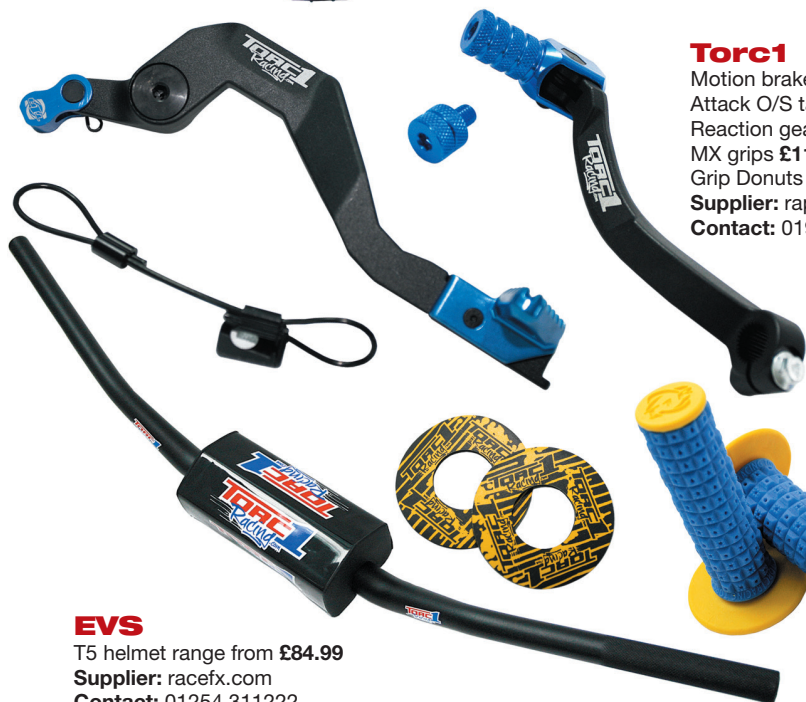
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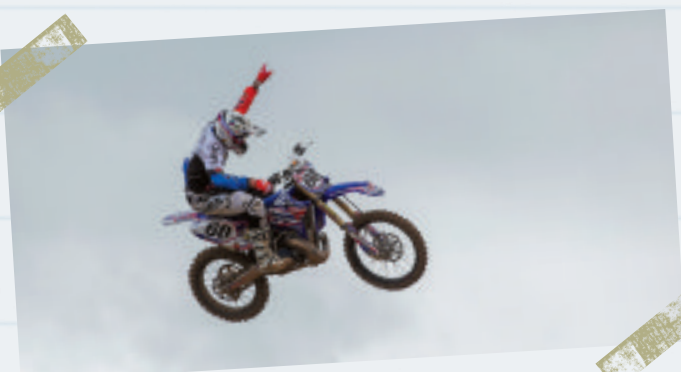
OF MATTERLEY

**AN ALPHABETICAL LOOK AT
THE BRITISH GP...**

A IS FOR ANTONIO (CAIROLI)

Tony Cairoli can't seem to catch a break in 2016 and after finishing a solid second in race one overshot the landing of the monster quad in race two and injured his left wrist. Matterley Basin's winningest ever rider toughed it out to finish 10th but scored 17 points less on the day than current MXGP series leader Tim Gajser.





B IS FOR BRAD (ANDERSON)

The North Easterner won his second EMX300 GP on the bounce with a stunning 2-1 scorecard on the equally stunning GL12 Yamaha to move within 28 points of series leader Mike Kras. Ando's team-mate Lewis Gregory joined him on the podium to give team boss Bob Buchanan one of the happiest moments of his life – so far.



D IS FOR DESALLE (CLEMENT)

A 17-4 scorecard isn't quite the result that Clement Desalle was looking for at Matterley Basin as he continues his fight back from injury although to be honest he didn't seem overly disappointed. "It was good to end the weekend with a top five result especially after the first race. I had a bad start and then during the first lap I jumped on a mound of earth and did a superman! I didn't crash but my adrenalin was up – I lost my rhythm and even crashed later in the lap. I was last, as long way back, and recovered to 17th so for sure it was good to get a fourth position in the next race. I had a better start around fifth or sixth and then came through to fourth – I tried to catch a podium but Paulin also had a good rhythm."



F IS FOR FERRANDIS (DYLAN)

After running Jeffrey Herlings ridiculously wide off the start at the French GP, Dylan Ferrandis was threatened with sanctions from the FIM if he pulled another similar stunt. As it turned out he never got to see which way Jeffrey went at the British GP as the Kawasaki star struggled to get off the line and had to make two trips through the pack for his two second place finishes.



C IS FOR CHAD (REED)

He came, he saw, he rolled around for 14th and 17th place finishes and 13th overall. Chad Reed might not have set the world championship alight in his first MXGP appearance in over a decade but he certainly livened things up a fair bit and all credit to him kept plugging away in that drizzly second moto after a first lap clash with Jeremy van Horebeek that would have seen lesser men pull out. It's also worth pointing out that the Aussie was one of only two riders – Tanel Leok being the other – to remove their caps for the playing of the Dutch national anthem as they were prepping their gates for moto two. That kind of class costs nowt...



E IS FOR EMX250

This 'support' class offered up some of the best racing of the weekend as all 40 qualifiers fought tooth and nail for the full duration of both motos. It possibly helped that we had a British winner n'all as former EMX250 champ Steven Clarke steered his Apico Husqvarna to a stunning victory courtesy of 2-1 finishes. Well done Scuba and all the other British qualifiers – Carlton Husband, Josh Gilbert, Liam Knight, Luke Norris, James Cottrell, Robert Davidson, Lewis Tombs, Jake Millward, Jordan Divall, Matt Bayliss, Tom Neal and Kieran Banks.



G IS FOR GAJSER (TIM)

The kid of the class is proving to be 'the man' in MXGP and two more wins for Tim Gajser see him extend his championship lead to a massive 74 points with seven rounds remaining. The things the Slovenian can do with his factory CRF450R are absolutely mind boggling and he's pretty much rewriting the rule book of what's possible on an MX machine which is pretty damn impressive for a 19-year-old MXGP class rookie.



H IS FOR HONDA

It seems that the push from the Honda factory is paying off for them in the 450 class as all three factory riders go well in the Basin's very changeable conditions. Obviously Gajser rocketed to victory on his Pirelli rubbered bike while the Dunlop backed boys – Bobryshev and Paulin – managed third and fourth overall although not in that order.



I IS FOR ICEONE

Max Nagl powered to second overall at Matterley courtesy of a 7-2 scorecard on his IceOne Husqvarna but the big news coming out of the Kimi Raikkonen-owned camp over the weekend was the possible signing of Gautier Paulin for 2017. Max Anstie already has a contract in place to jump into the squad for his debut season in the MXGP class but it's undecided who'll be joining him just yet. Both Nagl and Paulin are in talks with team manager Antti Pyrhonen who also hinted that the team might even run three riders in 2017 as they did last year.

J IS FOR JEFFREY (HERLINGS)

The Justin Bieber belieber – the US pop star is apparently the only person that Jeffrey follows on Twitter – added two more moto victories to the tally and notched up his 58th grand prix victory at Matterley Basin by doing what he does best and dominating like an absolute boss. As the master of the class he came down to the line for moto one around 20 minutes after everyone else – and long after all the premium gates had been prepped – and took the spot that Aleksandr Tonkov had lovingly worked on. Fortunately the Russian didn't seem too worried, diplomatic communications didn't break down and Vladimir Putin didn't have to get involved. Phewsh!



K IS FOR KTM (ARE CLEVER)

Right up until I realised that I'd lost the memory card with the perfect shot on, I was so gonna run an image of the KTM promo girl who was rocking, what Austin Powers could only describe as, a cracking pair of machine gun jubbies. Instead let's use this shot of Claudio DeCarli and his buddy following the MXGP Live Timing feature on the all-new DBR news app. Good choice there orange peeps (on both counts)...



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Photo: H. Schiedl

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L IS FOR LEOK (TANEL)

The Estonian Express was one of the seven riders present who also raced in Matterley Basin's very first GP back in 2006. Back then the Estonian Express was a factory Kawasaki rider and ran 6-4 for fifth overall in MX1. Unfortunately his results weren't quite so strong 10 years on and this time around he ended up 19th overall in MXGP with 20-16 finishes on the MVR-D Husqvarna. Just in case you were wondering the other riders who were in action 10 years ago too were Clement Desalle, Tommy Searle, Shaun Simpson, Brad Anderson, Rui Goncalves and Tony Cairoli...



M IS FOR MAX (ANSTIE)

After winning Saturday's qualifying heat all eyes were on Max Anstie at Matterley Basin. Despite being the first rider down to the start for both motos and prepping his gate perfectly, Max had bad getaways on Sunday which meant he had to battle through the pack in both motos. Fifth overall from 8-4 finishes isn't what any of us hoped for but wasn't totally disastrous either and actually moved Max from ninth to seventh in the series standings...

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N IS FOR NICHOLLS (JAKE)

Yak is back! If you think back to 2013 and that almost victory in the MX2 class and then compare it to this year's performance against some of those exact same peeps and you'll see Jake's firing on all cylinders once more. That first moto ride was awesome and if it hadn't been for the Hoff using his factory bike advantage to the max then it would have netted Jake his first top 10 finish since Matterley in 2014! Still, a season-best equalling 11th is reason to celebrate even if a little hot headedness in race two resulted in a no score.

O IS FOR 'OLY SH*T!

If you were close to the spot where EMX250 wildcard Jordan Booker crashed on Saturday afternoon you'll have no doubt heard the boozed-up spectator shout "oly sh*t" n'all – it were a big 'un!





P IS FOR PAULIN (GAUTIER)

After slamming hard at his home GP just a week or two ago some pit pundits thought it was doubtful that Gautier Paulin would even race at Matterley right up until he rolled out for Free Practice. Fans of the Frenchman will be glad he did though as his 5-3 effort on the Factory Honda ensured Paulin made it onto the podium for only the second time this summer. Bravo!



R IS FOR ROMAIN (FEBVRE)

The reigning champ's luck ran out on Saturday when a clash with Ben Townley – who found out he's being released from his Suzuki contract at the end of the year – in the qualifying heat saw the #461 slam face first into the dirt leaving him unconscious and with facial injuries. Picking up a concussion and a fractured right middle finger (although that could be RSI from flipping people off) Febvre was unable to race on Sunday.



T IS FOR TOMMY (SEARLE)

Tommy knocked it up a notch for his home GP and really gave the British fans something to cheer about in the ultra competitive MXGP division. After finishing a fighting eighth in race one he was running seventh in the second until encountering some goggle problems due to the persistent drizzle. "The rain came down and I had a 'mare," he said. "I couldn't see a thing and in two laps I'd slipped down to 14th. I had to throw my goggles away but I should have done it sooner."



Q IS FOR QUALIFYING

Saturday's qualifying heats normally don't mean much but on this occasion the MXGP clash probably decided the outcome of this year's title chase while the MX2 race gave Max Anstie a reason to celebrate in front of his home fans.



S IS FOR SHAUN (SIMPSON)

Although there were rumours running rife around Matterley Basin that someone had heard Shaun Simpson saying 'somebody's poisoned the waterhole' and 'there's a snake in my boots' the real reason for his lack of speed was down to the hand injury he'd picked up in France. Despite making the podium in Maxxis action one week earlier the pounding Woody's paw was taking on the huge jumps and high-speed hits of Matterley was simply too much and rather than risk further injury the three-time British champ wisely decided to sit out moto two after struggling to 19th in the opener...



U IS FOR THE UNUSUAL

Chad Reed's entry left Youthstream in a quandary as the Aussie wanted to run his career number – 22 – in the GP which was already taken by MXGP regular Kevin Strijbos. Rather than do what the AMA would and offer Chad some crazy-ass three digit ditty they simply asked Speedy Reedy to stick a 'G' after his #22. Although likely to be G for Guest we like to think it's in honour of Aussie Steve Gall who won the 1984 Chelsea supercross with a huge letter G instead of a number. As it turns out the G wasn't necessary as Strijbos was a non-starter anyway...



V IS FOR VAN HOREBEEK (JEREMY)

The Jerre suffered some bad luck at the British GP and after struggling to make passes in race one could only finish sixth. A first lap fall in moto two – that also involved Chad Reed – meant Jeremy had to fight back through the pack from 28th to eighth without goggles. Although it's yet to be officially announced, this difficult term with Yamaha is likely to be Van Horebeek's last and if the word down on Pit Lane is true he'll be lining up in yellow next season. Remember kids, you heard it here first...

W IS FOR WHERE'S MY MEMORY CARD?

Every so often our esteemed editor makes a monumental balls up and when that happens we feel it's only right to remind him what an absolute ape he is. So when he came back from Matterley with a face like a slapped ass complaining that the memory card that had all of his race one shots on it had gone missing we knew that we had to make him suffer. So if anyone found a 4GB SanDisk Compact Flash card at Matterley Basin with a bunch of blurry shots on it then please hold it to ransom...



X IS FOR X-RAYS

The medical unit was flat out almost all weekend as the high speed nature and hard surface of the Matterley Basin circuit wasn't all that forgiving to those who took a close look. Fortunately there were no mega serious injuries and most soil samplers were able to walk away and taste dirt another day. That'd make an ace Bond movie title...

Y IS FOR YAMAHA

The blue brand launched their 2017 models with a Friday night media bash in the Matterley pits that starred legendary Yamaha athletes Romain Febvre, Chad Reed and Jeremy van Horebeek as well as MXGP TV commentator Paul Malin. Big changes for the 2017 model range include an all-new cylinder head and a lower centre of gravity for the YZ250F while the 450 and two-smokers are given smaller tweaks and tickles...



Z IS FOR ZARAGOZA (JORGE)

Jorge Zaragoza is a staple ingredient of any MXGP A to Z much like Xavier Boog was before he dropped away from the world championship scene as Xs and Zs are a bit of a rarity around these parts. So what can be said about the Spanish Honda rider? Hmmm, well I guess 12th overall in the talent packed MX2 class is fairly impressive. Good work Jorge!

ULTIMATE

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Words by **Ryan Houghton** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

BIG TESTS!



It may seem odd to mention 2015 when testing the 2017 generation of motocrossers (a mark of how early bikes are launched I guess) but 2015 really was the year that KTM actually had to take stock and at their motocross portfolio. Having won nigh-on every 125cc/MX2 world title since the turn of the century and every MX1 crown since snaffling Tony Cairoli from Yamaha, KTM were sitting on high as pros and amateurs alike lapped up their machinery. Hell, they even won in America under the heavyweight talents of Ken Roczen and Ryan Dungey.

Now with world titles disappearing to Honda and Yamaha, Roczen taking Carmichael's cash at Suzuki and Husqvarnas selling like hotcakes on the national front KTM have to fight to maintain their reputation and sales records.

First up you gotta say how nice the KTM's look. Cosmetically they're pretty much the same as 2016 with just a new seat cover and graphics to take your eye. Physically the entire range has new forks from WP and a new engine mapping switch with traction control to boot on the four-strokes. On the two-stroke front KTM have smashed out a brand-new 250cc engine which they claim is the most powerful they've ever produced.

The test was done at Buttercup Farm which was in prime condition for having an almighty go at these proper quick Austrian masterpieces. Typically for June it was pi*sing down so fair play to the Buttercup Farm team for prepping an awesome track.

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250 SX-F

I'll begin with the 250F and straightaway it's a very impressive package. KTM has produced another stunning MX2 class bike. The engine is very strong with tons of power. For any hobby rider it's more than enough to go racing with and be really competitive straight out the box. Even for a pro rider or local expert racing British or club championships if you haven't a great deal of money to pump into a bike all you need is a pipe and an ignition and you will be away.

The stock suspension is good and it does the job but it's not great, certainly not for someone of my size or a good quick rider. But if you take the time to set it up properly then you won't be far away.

On the morning of the test there were a few really slippery berms where there was a greasy layer on top as it had rained the night before. I was coming out of it pretty squirrely as the back tyre was lighting up and not getting any traction. In response to that challenge KTM have fitted a new traction control system to counter these exact conditions. And what an amazing difference the traction control made as well – to be honest I was pretty shocked at how bloody good it was.

I had tested the 2017 Husqvarnas a week beforehand in the dry using the same ECU and I thought the traction control function was unnecessary but now I'm glad this test has cleared that disappointment up. It made a hard corner a damn sight easier for a start. All I had to do was concentrate on the front end, hit the power and it would control the power perfectly.

All the four-strokes are fitted with two engine maps – one for a soft setting and one for a more aggressive power delivery. You'll be pleased to know that the maps are night and day different. The contrast is quite stark...experts would always want the hard hitting aggressive map while beginners should always choose the softer option.

The best part of it is that you can switch maps mid-moto whenever you like and the softer setting is a godsend in the wet on these powerful four-strokes. A must for those whose throttle control ain't quite as good as a pro like Kevin Windham or some other flash mofo who's as smooth as silk.



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350 SX-F

The 350 is a lovely bike to ride – as are all the KTMs – and I have had friends ask me for some advice about which bike to choose in the past. I would certainly recommend it for a hobby rider next year (it defo goes like sh*t off a stick) but as a serious race machine is just doesn't cut the mustard for me. You've only got to look at how many pros are jumping off them and getting back on a 450F to see that the smaller capacity bike is causing them problems...most notably off the start where you will get buried.

Other than that it comes with all the features of its smaller and bigger cousins and there are definitely no complaints about its handling or the power you get from the motor. One great feature which is standard on all the KTM models is the hydraulic clutch. This Brembo version is extremely light to the touch on your fingers and has a really responsive bite. I am quite heavy rider on the clutch and my standard hydraulic clutch this year has been amazing.

Husky and KTM do use different versions – Magura on a Husqvarna – but having an hydraulic clutch (why the Japs don't is still a mystery) is a huge money saver for me as I was using one a meeting last year and now I'm only on my second clutch by mid-season. Think what the missus will say if you tell her that a new KTM would actually save you money! On the whole I don't mind the mid-engine bike but the 350 is one of those Marmite bikes for me. If you've enjoyed them in the past then the 2017 KTM version will be right up your street.



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450 SX-F

The proper open class 'crosser in the KTM fleet the 450SX-F is a real beast but it's a rideable beast. It really isn't short of power and it's so light for a 450 that you can hardly notice the difference in weight compared to the 250F.

Again the mapping switch works great. At Buttercup Farm they have a concrete start pad so I thought it would be a good idea to test out the launch control. Basically you start the bike and hold the map button and the traction control button down at the same time for a few seconds and it activates the traction control system – simples!

And what a difference it makes off the concrete. This season a lot of the Maxxis British championships races have been off concrete starts and I have really been struggling. It is too easy to get excited and spin the rear wheel up too much where you're too aggressive with your throttle control. But with the launch control the bike does the thinking for you. Winner, winner – chicken dinner. All you do as the jockey is hold the gas on and let go of the clutch – holeshot here we come!

KTM have also given the 450 a four-speed transmission and that worked a treat as well. So much so that I hardly noticed it was missing fifth gear. The four-speed box on the 450 was nice, smooth and it never ran out of power anywhere. On that beast you really only use second and third anyway but that in itself is handy because it means less time flapping around changing gear and more time going faster!

Interesting the US version of the KTM will come with a five-speed gearbox to 'meet with the requirements of the faster American tracks as well as desert rides'. If the yanks go faster than us how come we keep beating them at the Des Nats anyway? I'd imagine the four-speed box would be plenty in most people's hands cos at 62hp it's got plenty of ponies for you to tame before you go flying thru the chestnut palings.

The bike handles like a peach with 'the new WP AER 48mm front forks providing outstanding response and damping characteristics' according to the KTM press release. With a little set-up that is pretty close to the truth and the rear shock felt planted and very trustworthy which is mightily important when playing around with this big beast.

A really enjoyable ride – all big bike enthusiasts will be in safe hands if this is their chosen steed for next season.





125 SX

The runt of the KTM litter is still a beauty no matter what the engineers do with four-strokes. It really is a great bike. The eighth-litre screamer feels like it has bundles of power especially for a little 125 and KTM claim it to be closing the gap to its massive MX2 rival the 250F.

The KTM 125 is still insanely fun and so easy to throw around and would be a brilliant purchase for beginners or smile seekers everywhere. All the two-stroke models come with a new Mikuni TX 38mm flat side carburettor which KTM say proves to be less sensitive to changes in air pressure, humidity and temperature, therefore reducing set up time which is a cow when you just wanna get going and have some fun.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



125 SX

Displacement: 124.8cc
Bore and stroke: 54 x 54.5mm
Transmission: 6 gears
Fuel system: Mikuni TX 38
Front suspension: WP-USD, AER 48
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 375mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 87.2kg



250 SX

Displacement: 249cc
Bore and stroke: 66.4 x 72mm
Transmission: 5 gears
Fuel system: Mikuni TX 38
Front suspension: WP-USD, AER 48
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 375mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 95.4kg



250 SX-F

Displacement: 249.9cc
Bore and stroke: 78 x 52.3mm
Transmission: 5 gears
Fuel system: Keihin EFI – 44mm throttle body
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 370mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 98.2kg



350 SX-F

Displacement: 349.7cc
Bore and stroke: 88 x 57.5mm
Transmission: 5 gears
Fuel system: Keihin EFI – 44mm throttle body
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 370mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 99.8kg



450 SX-F

Displacement: 449.9cc
Bore and stroke: 95 x 63.4mm
Transmission: 4 gears
Fuel system: Keihin EFI – 44mm throttle body
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 370mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 100.2 kg

250 SX

The 250 two-stroke's peak era has long since gone but this fact has not deterred the mighty Austrians one bit and they still have the market covered. The 2017 250 has a brand-new engine as usual with the 'most power ever' tag but I really was impressed with what KTM have achieved. It has really nice power curve – it's not like a wild hit of power like previous models. Let's just say the power seems to be more forgiving. Also it's crazily light and doesn't feel far from the weight of the 125!

The first thing I noticed when I started it up was that there was no vibrations. All the 250 two-strokes I've ridden in the past have really had a zing to them and vibrated a lot but KTM have been working hard to stop that by moving the engine more centrally within the frame, fitted a new cylinder with a twin valve controlled power valve and new counter balance shaft. Man has that paid off and it makes it much more pleasurable to ride.

KTM have also given the bike (eligible for MX1 of course) the same Dampened Diaphragm Steel (DDS) clutch system as you will find on their flagship 450cc four-stroke so clearly they treat their two-stroke customers with the utmost respect. The DDS clutch is designed for a smoother clutch action which in turn benefits traction and durability. I thought the clutches on all the bikes were mega but I was just having so much fun on this mid-size two-stroke I think it must've been working beautifully.

Out of all the bikes I rode today the 250 two-stroke was my favourite and is seriously making me think about riding the EMX300 series next year. It's an awesome machine and could really put the fun back into your racing if you've found yourself in a four-stroke sized rut...



BOLT

FROM THE





ERZBERG ROOKIE BILLY'S A WHIZZ...

Words and photos by **Future7Media**

There must be something in the water around these parts because when it comes to producing top-notch Hard Enduro talent, Britain is currently top of the pile. Naturally, Graham Jarvis and Jonny Walker are the cream of that crop having won just about every race there is to win between them.

Behind them, stalwarts Paul Bolton and the Hemingway brothers – as well as a few others – are keeping the flag flying.

At this year's ErzbergRodeo, nine riders were credited with finishing the brutal Hare Scramble course. Of those nine a third was British finishers and there one was a new name on everyone's radar...

Billy Bolt is a name we're going to hear a lot about in the near future. Finishing fifth overall, having charged his way forward from the second row of the grid, has catapulted Bolt into the Hard Enduro limelight at the biggest race on the calendar in the best way possible. The 18-year-old former trials ace now has set his sights on Hard Enduro and with a result like Erzberg already in the bag – the future's bright for Bolt...

"Fifth for my first time at Erzberg has sort of taken me by surprise. It's the biggest race in enduro, it's the one all the top guys show up to win, so to run with them and even beat some of them is a pretty special feeling. I haven't quite taken it all in yet. I haven't really broken it down in my head yet but it's cool, that's for sure.

"We went there with no great expectations, I say we because it was literally Julian Stevens and myself. We packed

the van and drove two days to Austria. Simple really. The goal wasn't to win the thing or anything like that. It was basically finish and learn as much as possible. Of course we hoped for more, so to deliver that was mega.

"Finishing fifth was the limit of my top-end expectation if everything went well. Not qualifying on the front row had me nervous. I'm a trials guy not a speed guy. The flat-out sections of the prologue were unnerving for me. I knew I could deal with the Hare Scramble so it was actually the prologue that was my major concern. Just missing the front row in 51st wasn't great. It was a bit of a game changer but I was still confident I could come through quite well.

"I guess Erzberg ain't Erzberg without a few problems along the way. My bike over-heated and lost some water a couple of times so we had a couple of water fill-ups in there. Then after checkpoint 21, near the end, my chain came off and wrapped around the front sprocket. I had to take the swingarm out to free it. I lost about 35 minutes doing that so that was a shame.

"It's funny that Lazy Noon was one of the talking points. I didn't really think much about it at the time. I just saw those guys stuck, pinned it and hoped I'd make it to the top. The crowd went crazy for it. It was such a buzz but then I immediately felt like a goon when I caught my GoPro on the straps holding up the Red Bull arch. It nearly ripped my head off. I rode away from that section hoping no one noticed and not about getting into fifth!

"Erzberg's a pretty big deal. In terms of the scale of the event – I'd never been to anything like it. Not necessarily



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Billy gets ready to rumble in the back of Julian Stevens' truck



the place, just how much effort goes in from an organisational point of view. The media coverage and everything just blew me away. You see it on TV and stuff and think it's all ramped up but it's actually nuts. There are some serious loose guys about the place.

"I feel like Hard Enduro is what I want to do now. At 18 and a half years old I'm the right age to give it a go. Trials is still in my heart and right now I'm still a trials rider but my future isn't there anymore. I've got to try and do something else – I'm banking on Hard Enduro being it.

"It had been on my mind for a couple of years but I never really had anything pushing me to change. The World Trials Championship is getting smaller and smaller and is dying as a series if I'm honest, which is a shame. It's a sport that is dominated by Spain – their governing body is putting so much into it and there's no other country doing that or who can compete with it. Extreme enduro is growing and growing as trials is dying. I didn't want to leave it too late.

"At the Scott Trial I spoke to Julian. We then made a plan together and I got on an enduro bike for the first time in the second week of December and just loved it from there. That was the first time I'd ever ridden an enduro bike.

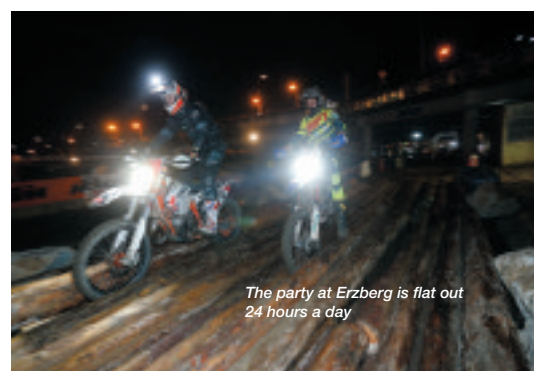
"It's been a real steep learning curve to start

but I'm enjoying the challenge. Every time I ride I'm still learning. I've been riding over rocks for 12 or 13 years and I'm not going to forget how to do that overnight so focusing on corner technique and carrying speed as much as possible is the main aim from now.

"Having guys like Graham Jarvis and Jonny Walker come across from trials and succeed like they have in enduro is a huge motivational factor. They've shown what can be done. They've given everyone a target to aim for.

"I'm not sure why British riders are at the top of the sport. Maybe it's just because we mostly ride in sh*tte! It's generally always muddy. Especially in the winter. I guess that just hardens you up and when it's sunny and hot it's a luxury. Being reared on mud riding techniques helps so much. You've got a better feel for grip.

"I've no idea where this journey is going to take me. I'm just taking it step by step, nothing more. I had a good result at Erzberg. The next milestone is to tackle Red Bull Romaniacs. Again finishing is a must and whatever comes after that is a bonus. At the minute it's difficult financially to make a definite plan because we're still relying on bits of help from here, there and everywhere. Plus bits that myself and Julian have managed to pull in. We'll just keep chipping away and see where things lead."



The party at Erzberg is flat out 24 hours a day



Half way into the Hare Scramble and Billy's bike is already battered



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GIANT KILLER!

King Graham slays 'em all at Erzberg

Laying waste to his competition by winning the Hare Scramble by over 33 minutes, Graham Jarvis didn't just destroy his opposition – he destroyed the Iron Giant too. His effortless, flawless, super composed, silky smooth perfect riding ensured no one got a look in. He might be 41 years young, but Jarvis proved once again that he's still the King of Hard Enduro.

"It's incredible to get another win in the bag. I'm 41 years old now and I never really thought that I could still do it. I know I have the ability but you need the luck too to get it done and over the years I've had my fair share of bad luck. It's a huge victory for me, one of the best.

"It was one of those perfect days of riding. I can't really fault it – everything pretty much went to plan. My goal is to always start inside the top 10 and I did that. I'm happy then, more relaxed because I know then that I can pass a few riders.

"I got a little lucky on one of the first impossible climbs. When I came into the forest I saw both Gomez and Blazusiak stuck, I picked a better line, got in front of them and was pulled up first. That made the difference right there.

"Once in the lead I just got down to business. I was in a flow and everything was coming to me. I remembered all my lines through Carls Dinner and I think I came out of there with about a 10 minute lead. I knew I could win after that.

"By the time I got to Dynamite my advantage had grown again. It was harder this year with an extra climb but I picked my way through it nicely. I got out of there without too much trouble.

"Riding into the winner's enclosure was an awesome feeling. I felt good in Brazil, I was riding well but the win didn't happen there. I came to Erzberg feeling ready and I think I got my riding to peak just at the right time. Like I said, I'm 41 years young but I think there's still a bit of life left in the old dog."



TADDY'S TRIAL!

The Iron Giant tests Blazusiak's limits

With five wins to his credit, Taddy Blazusiak is the most successful rider around the Iron Giant. From 2007 to 2012 he clocked up five straight Hare Scramble wins and wrote his name into the record books. But his dominant reign ended five years ago and a lot has happened since then. Granted, Blazusiak's racked up a dozen endurocross championships on both sides of the Atlantic but while he was doing that, Hard Enduro moved onwards and upwards.

After a very brief return in 2015, Blazusiak was determined to see things through in 2016 but it wouldn't prove an easy run to the chequered flag. Eighth, and over one hour 20 minutes behind winner Graham Jarvis, things didn't go quite to plan.

"Things went well in the beginning," recalled Blazusiak. "I made it out of the quarry cleanly this time and led a bit too. But during the first forestry section I made a rookie mistake on a climb which pretty much sparked off a catalogue of disasters. My bike got wedged between some trees and ripped off my brake lever. I got going again but then broke my clutch too.

"By the time I got going again all I wanted to do was finish but then I made some ground back up and thought I could salvage a top five result. And then I messed a few more things up. The whole race was up and down, but that's the way it goes sometimes at Erzberg I guess!"





TOUGH ENOUGH?

Is the world's toughest race too tough?

Erzberg is world renowned as the toughest single day enduro, it's mainly the reason why 1500 riders are quick to sign up. But has the race become a little too much, is it more about survival than racing? Paul Bolton, seventh, was in two minds about what he'd just put himself through for almost four hours...

"I love coming to Erzberg but sometimes it sort of makes me wonder. I love a challenge, I enjoy the struggle, but sometimes they go overboard when it comes to setting out the track. I wanna race my bike and not have to push it most of the way around. Some parts of the course were beyond impossible and to me that's not racing – it's killing the close battles."



Bolton makes a splash on the Prologue



Chris Windle ended the Hare Scramble 26th out of the 500 starters

BRIT WATCH!

The best of the UK's rest

Granted Graham Jarvis waved the Union Jack the highest when he stormed to victory and along with Billy Bolt and Paul Bolton, British riders made up one third of the finishers. But with 38 Brits in the Hare Scramble, there were a lot of other strong results to commend.

Cracking the top 10, Jonathan Richardson (KTM) was the only other rider, aside from the finishers, to clear 23 of the 25 checkpoints. Ben Hemingway (Beta) and Andy Noakley (KTM) sneaked inside the top 20 with 17th and 18th respectively. Hats off to Erzberg newcomer Chris Windle (Beta) who was credited with 26th while Keelan Hancock (Husqvarna) made it past Carls Dinner in 36th.

And finally a big shout out to our editor's childhood friend Thomas Holmes who finished a very reasonable 142nd in the Iron Road prologue. Admittedly, Sunday didn't go nearly so well but fair play to the High Peak plumber for sending his KTM 300 up the mountainside so damn quickly...



IRON GIANT SNIPPETS

Even more Erzberg madness . . .

- Lazy Noon – the final climb – was a major talking point. Grinding some of the best to a halt it saw positions chop and change in the dying moments of the race.
- SuperEnduro champ Colton Haaker popped his Erzberg cherry. He didn't finish but dug deep to reach Checkpoint 19.
- Still nursing a recent thumb surgery, Ben Hemingway was admittedly off pace and failed to finish for the first time in as long as we can remember.
- Nine riders reached the finisher's enclosure, Phillip Scholz slipped in under the four hour time allowance with just four minutes to spare.
- Graham Jarvis was nothing short of astounding. Despite not taking the race lead until the 30-minute marker, he raced on to win by more than 33 minutes completing the course in two hours 18 minutes.
- Britain's always well represented at Erzberg with 38 riders qualifying through to the Hare Scramble.
- Sandra Gomez was the highest placed female rider reaching Checkpoint 8.
- Two riders made the trip from Korea to compete.
- If you fancied a helicopter ride around Erzberg you would have been surprised to learn that Felix Baumgartner was your pilot.
- Although not doing the Hare Scramble, Jane Daniels raced the prologue. Fastest woman, she was 151st in the standings too.

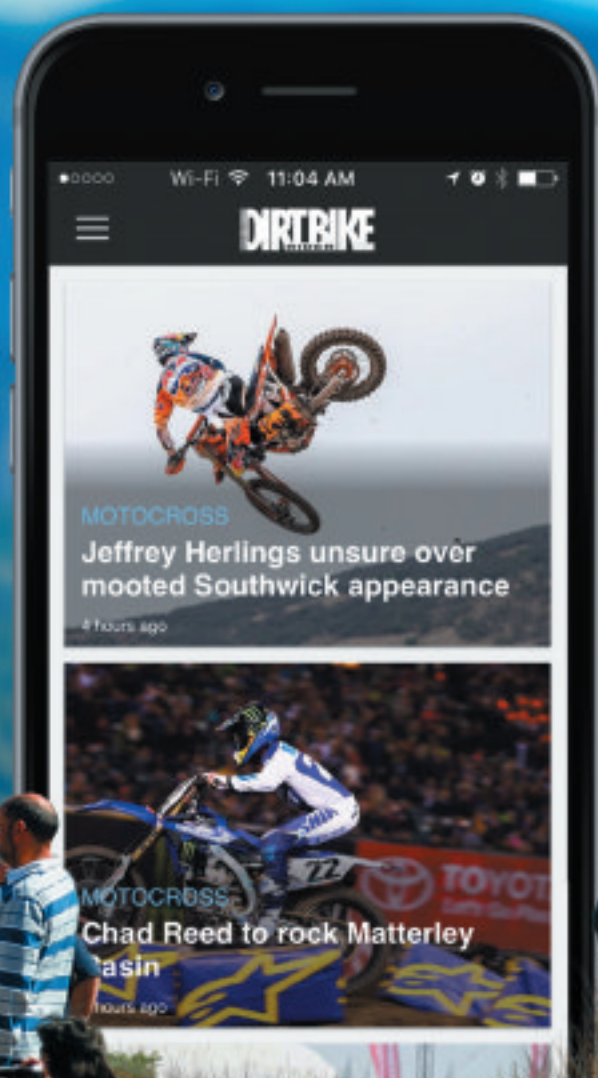
The nine men who made it to the finish within the four hour limit



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RENCHES

I N T H E W O R K S !

THE INSIDE LINE AT PRO CIRCUIT WITH PROFESSIONAL SPANNER SPINNERS JON PRIMO AND OLLY STONE

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki is one of the most feared race teams in motorcycle racing. Any doubters to that claim only have to open the door to the 'PC' facility in Corona, California and walk into reception. The first thing that comes into view is a line of race bikes. A long line. Almost one for all the 29 AMA championships they have totalled in 25 years of existence – 2016 bringing the crew up to a quarter of a century setting new boundaries for technical excellence, performance and delivery.

Walking past the Hondas (for two years) and then Kawasakis and watching the development through two-stroke, four-stroke, fuel injection, carbon, titanium, air forks, electronics, start devices – the march of Pro Circuit innovation as a technical specialist and tuner is matched by the heavy-weight roster of the athletes that saw the team as the essential stepping stone. McGrath, Pichon, Brown, Carmichael, Stewart, Pourcel, Villopoto, Langston, Townley, Wilson and many more have all raced for the team.

Behind the locked doors and workspace created, patrolled and controlled by owner and victory-addict Mitch Payton is a cosmopolitan squad of 10 people and five riders hand-picked and then negotiating a relentless racing calendar that will involve 17 supercross races, 12 'outdoor' motocross rounds of the national series and other events like the Monster Energy Cup and the annual Motocross of Nations (if one of the Pro Circuit riders is selected for their country).

Pro Circuit have become an institution in off-road motorcycle racing, not just in the USA but globally as the brand has become allied with supremacy. The Corona reception area acts as part shop, part museum and part 'waiting area' with fans, clients and media coming through the tinted glass on a frequent basis.

Pro Circuit's track record is stunning in itself but add the important connection to Team Green's youth development scheme (exciting 17 year old Austin Forkner is the latest sensation to bound off the line) origins with Monster Energy that go back to the first days of the company and European links in MXGP means they are something of a behemoth.

Stories about the operation have circulated for years; Payton, as the chief whip-cracker, mandating a level of dedication and achievement to match his own lofty expectations but then also playing a fatherly role and nurturing the best out of imported talent to AMA competition like Frenchman, Kiwis, South Africans, Brits and even a Swiss. Guiding enigmatic and individual stars like Christophe Pourcel and Josh Hansen among others. Stories of how defeat can float a 'dark cloud' through the Californian blue skies and over the workshop (and it has been quite 'overcast' in Corona the last four years), and – conversely – how victory is celebrated with 'Pizza Mondays' for the entire firm.

One of the lesser-told traits of Pro Circuit is the diverse collection of mechanics and technicians that form the tightly-knit race crew. "We've had Aussies, Kiwis, South Africans, French – this team has a good continental twang throughout," says Briton Olly Stone now a four year 'vet' of and a mechanic who realised a lifetime dream to be under Payton's wing. "I guess Mitch just keeps an open mind."

To get a grasp on what it feels like to selected and then hit the ground running in one of American motocross' strongholds we asked both Stone and Frenchman Jon Primo to talk a bit about their experiences at Pro Circuit and just as the 2016 AMA Pro National motocross series starts to gather pace (Joey Savatgy already securing their first overall triumph of the campaign with a win at Hangtown for the season opener).

JON PRIMO

MECHANIC FOR ARNAUD TONUS AND FIVE YEARS AS PART OF PRO CIRCUIT



DBR: Jon, you took a job here in 2012 and moved from being a championship-winning Grand Prix mechanic. Can you talk a bit about the job and how it has changed for you here in half a decade?

JP: "It has changed quite a bit simply because you learn more and get to know the people and the longer you are here the more responsibility you are given and Mitch shows you more things. So you get to do a bit more each year and if you show that you want to know more then you get the opportunity."

DBR: Why is there such an international flavour to this place?

JP: "I asked Mitch that same question once and he said something along the lines of not being totally sure! But he felt Europeans want to work more and we're not scared to work. When we do the Grands Prix he knows that we travel and we're on the road a lot, living in a Sprinter [van] and it is more like it was here back in the day. He says that background helps a lot. He has always liked Europeans and is pretty open-minded."

DBR: It seems quite intense here – the workload, racing schedule, the desire to succeed...

JP: "It is. Our season starts in the first week of January so we have eight weeks of supercross on one coast and eight on the other – so 16 races. As soon as supercross comes to an end we are testing for motocross. We never stop because when the motocross season is done then we are working for the next January. Then we have things like the Motocross of Nations which is pretty cool when we can go. The workload never really ends and Mitch is always trying to find more power for the bike or Bones [Jim Bacon] for the suspension will want to continually try something new. Nothing is left on the side. It is intense...but it is also good for learning and

seeing a lot of stuff. It is hard...but beneficial."

DBR: That must require a high level of dedication; of committing yourself totally to the job...

JP: "I think we have one week off for the year and then a few days here and there. If we don't help some of the guys on the other coast for supercross then we can actually have a weekend off. It's not a lot but it's enough for us. I chose to be here, nobody put a knife to my throat and I don't regret anything. If you want to improve and be one of the best mechanics then it is what you should go through."

DBR: Mitch is quite famous for this desire to win. So what is it like here when the victories and championships arrive and on the other side what has it been like recently when there's been a bit of a dry spell?

JP: "It was almost normal here to win at least one championship a year but we haven't seen one since 2013 so the workload became even bigger as we looked even harder at the bike and were testing suspension and so many engine specs. Mitch did not want to leave any stone unturned and made sure the riders are happy and will do anything to make it all work."

"The good times? Going to the track, seeing the riders happy and responding puts a good mood around the place. It's not like Mitch is a mean guy. If you work hard and show him that you want it as much as he does then he will do anything for you and vice-versa. It is a give-take. If you are slack at work then you'll be told. He is a really good guy and I'm not just saying that because I'm on the record!"

DBR: How is it handling different riders and changes from season to season? How does that affect the atmosphere?

JP: "I worked with [Darryn] Durham in the first year and then another two after that – then with Arnaud. You create links >>>





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Jon unloads a box van after a long day at the test track



with the guys and build relationships where you want to go that extra mile or do a bit more to make him happy on the bike. You definitely need something in common with your rider to get to that point. The whole thing is like a chain – if you are missing a link then it doesn't pull together and it won't work. If your guy is a dick then you don't want to do much for him, even though you are getting paid for it. It helps when you can get on with your rider."

DBR: What about being French here? Pro Circuit has a strong past affiliation with French riders...

JP: "In the beginning it was quite hard for me because I didn't know how to take the jokes and the talk – were they being funny or personal? I got used to it and even make fun of myself sometimes with a stupid French accent. Through the years you get to learn how it all works and

how you get to joke about stuff."

DBR: o you have a good Pro Circuit story?

JP: "Hmmm, maybe the Nations in St Jean D'Angely in 2011. I was just switching from KTM to Pro Circuit and I walked into the Alpinestars hospitality in the evening after the race and everybody was pretty intoxicated. People were getting clothes ripped off them and I had my shirt torn away! It was pretty crazy. Sometimes we'll have a Christmas party or end-of-year party at Mitch's house and he's a really good guy – outgoing and fun."

DBR: What's the best thing about Pro Circuit?

JP: "That you are working for the best team in the industry and being able to see what goes into the racing because we are working on a lot of things with the engine. It's a real education."

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OLLY STONE

MECHANIC FOR AUSTIN FORKNER, FORMER GRAND PRIX WRENCH AND NOW STARTING HIS FOURTH YEAR IN CORONA



DBR: People talk about the Pro Circuit working system – how was it fitting into that and has the job evolved since you came into the set-up as the ‘new guy’?

OS: “Once you pick it up then I wouldn’t say it is easy but there is a routine. There have been newer mechanics since I’ve been here and I’ve had to teach them the same methods that I was taught. I was fortunate enough to learn from some of the greats like Paul Perebijnos who won a championship with Dean Wilson, Wayne Lumgair, a world championship winning mechanic and all of whom were here many years before me. I said to Mitch that I felt I learnt from a great generation of mechanics so it is up to me to uphold that and teach the new guys how it was done back in the day. It is so second-nature to me now and I know what I have to do and what needs to be done and prepped.”

DBR: What is the atmosphere like here with success and

then a dry patch?

OS: “I cannot really talk about it too much because since I joined there hasn’t been a championship win! I don’t know if I’ve jinxed it! In my first season we won a couple of races and [Blake] Baggett was second in the Outdoors. Like everyone always hears when we win we get pizza and in my first year I was getting a bit sick of it because we were winning a lot. In my second year I was with [Dean] Wilson and we won some races and [Adam] Cianciarulo – actually I think Pro Circuit won the most amount of supercrosses that season but no championship. Winning races is good but the main man wants title plaques on the walls and he doesn’t care how he gets it. 2015 was shi*ty – a bad year.”

DBR: Is Mitch like a machine? Is he the same year-on-year for the demands he sets?

OS: “He has high expectations but I think I do as well, being



on this team. You sign for this team just like a rider - you expect to win. I am working with [Tyler] Bowers for supercross and was last year. I think it was A2 in 2015 where he led almost the whole race and let [Cooper] Webb pass him with two laps to go and I was letting him 'have it' on the podium. I didn't even stay around to watch it. Tyler was second but I was that pissed off I just went back to the truck. The next day my girlfriend was like "you really need to talk to Tyler about that...". Back to the question though and I don't like getting to races unprepared as I think it makes us look bad. He [Mitch] has high expectations and it rubs off."

DBR: It sounds like your spinning at a high speed...

OS: "It's more than a job. It is a lifestyle and a passion...and it has to be a passion. When we work late then Mitch is the last guy to leave. It is a passion for him. I didn't move half way around the world and sacrifice so much just to be at the races and say 'hey, look at me' or live the American dream but on the other hand it is quite tough and hard to be away from so much and miss so much. When you win it makes it all worthwhile."

DBR: The international 'make-up' at Pro Circuit means it is quite unusual in the paddock...

OS: "But it is a thing that's not unusual to this team. Mitch wants good guys and looks far and wide to find those that fit best. We work a lot here and I would say - personally - more than I did in Europe but then you have to think of the travelling for Grand Prix. Our first race was the Angel Stadium and it is a 15-mile drive for me and we went there twice! San Diego also twice and that's just an hour away. The first GP was in Qatar... and then Thailand and the guys also did pre-season races and do national championships. We should be finishing a bit earlier this year but a couple of GPs have been added to the calendar for us [Charlotte and Glen Helen] and then we're into Monster

Cup and then Red Bull Straight Rhythm. Before you know it then it's January and A1 is just around the corner."

DBR: You must have acclimatised to that schedule by now...

OS: "Yeah, it is tough the first couple of years but then you get used to it. For my last years in Europe I'd have 10 month contracts so I'd work January to October and then go back to England [from Belgium] in November and December and be so bored that I was hungry to get back to it! Here it just rolls. I quite like the fact that you do supercross and then draw a line under it. In Europe you'll do three GPs and then a Dutch race, another GP and then to a British Championship race. To go back to your earlier question - I do get burnt out. I was lucky last year because Bowers did not ride outdoors but then I did Loretta Lynn's and that was 12 days straight! I was like 'I wanna get back to the outdoors!'. At the end of the year I got 10 days in England but it didn't feel like enough."

DBR: So what are the perks to being here?

OS: "Like I said, winning...and the bonuses because of that! When you're a kid and you see the guys on a podium at a supercross and know that there are 60-70,000 people in a stadium watching the race...it is pretty cool and you want to be a part of it. I've won some races here for Mitch and there is no better feeling. You also get that cheque from the rider and that doesn't happen in Europe - it helps."

DBR: What about the technical side? 2015 wasn't great so does that put a lot of pressure to make a step?

OS: "Not so much...Mitch is making decisions and suspension is Bones' department but they don't see the guys every day at the track so I can make requests and they are taken seriously. We have so many resources here and technically-minded people here that we all work together as a unit to make the best package possible."

Jon and Olly are a long way from home but they wouldn't change a thing about their careers



BURNICLE'S BEAT

BACK ON THE BOX!

THE DAY THAT TEAM GB
REMOUNTED THE MXDN ROSTRUM...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle



Jem Whatley and that helmet skate the blue-groove



Finn Ismo Vehkonen (125 Suzuki) flattens a despairing Dane on the opening lap of race one



Luxembourg's Jacky Martens (500 KTM) leads Dutchman van den Berk (250 Yam) and Aussie Jeff Leisk (500 Honda)



When Karen Whatley recently posted a picture of the crash helmet she wore for a pillion lift home it was a handsome affair decorated in British Racing Green, the

Union flag and a white number 59. Where on earth can that have come from? Her husband Jem ran some rum numbers in his grand prix career but this one actually dates back to the 1989 Motocross des Nations at Gaildorf, near Stuttgart in southern Germany. The high number reflects how badly Great Britain had done in France in 1988 with both Whatley and Dave Thorpe absent injured. This pairing had previously been part of rostrum team finishes at Wohlen, Switzerland in 1982, Angreau in Belgium in 1983 and Maggiora, Italy in 1986.

British Racing Green is the traditional motorsports livery for teams representing the UK – back in the days before advertising took priority, British racing cars were painted that rich dark green. Other countries' colours included Italian red – still espoused by Ferrari and Ducati – French pale blue, Dutch orange, German white or silver and Belgian yellow. And our MX des Nations squads used to employ it too.

The 1982 team sported dark green helmets with red, white and blue shirts, though Graham Noyce typically couldn't be bothered and sat his red and white Honda helmet in his awning covered in grass! In 1983 (minus Noyce!) the team had green shirts and matching helmets and green headgear again at Maggiora three

years later. Mating the Union flag with traditional green in 1989 combined the best of both worlds, with Thorpe (500 Honda) sporting number 58, Whatley (250 Suzuki) number 59 and 17 year-old rising star Jamie Dobb (125 Honda) number 60. The team also wore uncompromisingly garish Union Jack jerseys!

Thorpe had just clinched his third world title while Jeff Ward had won the opening two rounds of the US 500 nationals. Kawasaki flew over an identical spec KX500 to his US bike so Wardy felt strong and confident, as did 21 year-old des Nations rookie, 250 Supercross and outdoor national champ Jeff Stanton (250 Honda). Their 125 berth, having been refused by both Ron Lechien and George Holland, was taken by a 20 year-old Honda support rider from Canyon County, California called Mike Kiedrowski. The 'MX Kied' emerged from a hard fought season as 125 US national champion before enjoying his first trip to Europe to contest the fabled Saporiti race at Arsago Seprio, near Milan. Direct rival Dobb was a regular visitor Stateside. "I rode against Kiedrowski earlier this year over there," he said. "I could catch him up then and I know I'm riding faster now!"

Other possible contenders included teams with ex-pat Yanks in their ranks. Italian resident and newly crowned world 125 champion Trampas Parker campaigned a 500cc Katoom for Italy alongside the man he beat to that title, Alex Puzar (Suzuki) and 250GP contender Michele Fanton. And the man who arrived in Europe alongside Parker in 1987, 'Bullet' Billy

Liles, a Luxembourg licence-holder in 500GPs, rode a 250 Kawasaki for the Grand Duchy alongside fellow 'Luxembourgian' and former 500GP vice-champion, Belgian Jacky Martens (500 KTM).

Their weak link would be native born third man Hans Mertens on a 125 Honda but back then only a team's best four results counted so a virtual two-man squad could pull it off! That would also suit the Netherlands, runners-up at Gaildorf in 1985. Gert-Jan van Doorn, a survivor from that epic year, had acquired Dave Strijbos's factory 125 Suzuki to join ex-world champ John van den Berk (250 Yamaha) but 500cc Honda mounted Leo Combee was no match for Kees van der Ven, who had brilliantly won a moto here in '85.

The most successful country in the contest's history, Belgium fielded a strong trio comprising Honda-mounted former world champions Georges Jobe (500) and Eric Geboers (250), though putting mighty beefcake Marnicq Bervoerts on a 1990 125 Kawasaki seemed a bit far-fetched! Finland, who claimed a rare rostrum in France 12 months earlier, turned out another imposing squad that featured the Vehkonen cousins Pekka, 1985 125 world champ and serial 250GP runner-up on a 250 Yamaha and former 500GP podium finisher Ismo on a 125 Suzuki. This left the big bike berth for ex-Yamaha factory 500GP pilot Kurt Lungqvist, now back on the almost retro air-cooled YZ490.

Australia had Glen Bell (Honda), who warmed up with a points-scoring ride in the final 125GP >>>



Jeff Leisk led the Aussies





YZ250F

Forward Thinking



YZ450F



YZ250F

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With its all-new high performance reverse cylinder head, that gives you stronger mid to high rpm pulling power, the 2017 YZ250F is built to win races. Whenever competing for the podium, this high-tech motocross bike supports you with smoother, quicker and more positive shifting, improved acceleration and new suspension settings. Everything of the new YZ250F is made to make you run harder and faster. Think forward. Think YZ250F. Yamaha YZ250F. Forward thinking.

US 125 champ Mike Kiedrowski enjoys the perfect MX setting on his second trip to Europe!



Race two funnels into the first turn led by Roland Diepold (74) but Stanton (2) is ready to pounce

of the season in France, lined up alongside 500GP vice-champion Jeff Leisk (Honda) and UK-based Craig Dack (250 Mitsui Yamaha). They were managed by Stephen Gall, one of a generation of younger team bosses that included Patrick Boniface (France), George Reiter (Austria) and Rolf Dieffenbach for the host nation. Germany finished third at Gaildorf in 1985 with a two-man squad thanks to fine rides by 'Didi' Lacher on a 125 KTM and Roland Diepold (250 Kawasaki). These two returned, former Italian 500GP winner Lacher on a 500 Honda alongside Kawasaki stalwart Diepold and Harald Ott (125 Honda).

Their chances took a painful dive during Saturday afternoon training when Diepold crashed heavily into the huge high-speed bombhole so beloved of their fans and broke a bone in his hand. Roland stubbornly refused to quit but the team's chances were surely compromised. Saturday also featured a strange stand-off between Dave Thorpe and his bitter open class rival Jeff Ward. Thorpey rued the incident later! "I lost my temper," admitted the usually imperturbable Englishman. "He waited for me when I was on a quick lap then held me up for half a dozen turns. I hit him real hard and he nearly went down then came back at me!" Kawasaki US team manager Roy Turner come over for a word with the world champion. "He made a lot out of the affair," remarked Thorpe. "Otherwise I'd have forgotten about it!"

The startline ballot for Sunday's races dealt the UK a cruel hand. 21st out of 22 teams meant the Brits lining up second from the outside of the 44 man two-tier grid, facing a long fast left-hand sweep into the tight, uphill right-handed first turn. Denmark was first out of the hat but the next half dozen were all contenders, Australia second ahead of France (runners-up in 1988), Italy, Germany, the USA and Belgium! The first moto pitted 125s against 500s. Open classers Leisk, Lacher and Jacky Martens holed out from Ward and Thorpe, who >>



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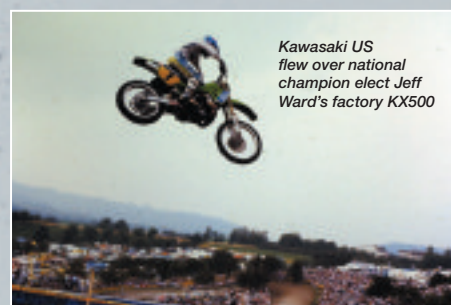
Podium is topped by the USA from 'Italians' Fanton, Puzar, Parker and Brits Thorpe, Whatley, Dobb



Thorpe fights off Leisk in the first moto



They came, they saw, they conquered. US national champs Kiedrowski, Ward and Stanton



Kawasaki US flew over national champion elect Jeff Ward's factory KX500



nailed it bravely round the outside. Stocky Glasgow-born Californian Ward broke clear, Thorpe initially challenging hard. Frenchman Patrick Demaria (KTM) led the 125s in 11th with Dobb 15th and Kiedrowski three places further back.

A deafening roar erupted as Lacher snatched third place from Leisk but Thorpe, skating and skidding desperately on the slick adverse cambers lost contact with an impressive Ward. Leisk retook Lacher at half-distance and Kiedrowski steamed through to head the 125s ahead of van Doorn, Dobb and Belgian Bervoerts. Poor Kurt Lungqvist, enmeshed in a rousing battle for fifth place with Martens, Jobe, Parker and Swede Peter Hansson (500 KTM) had his aircooled YZ490 blow itself comprehensively to bits.

Coupled with Ismo's first lap fall this began a day of disaster for the Finns. 'Dobber' finished sixth 125 after failing to fend off Puzar, who staged an electrifying charge from 30th on the first lap. Ward was riding a bike specially flown over from the States and identical spec to the one on which he led the 500 nationals. The USA's double ensured they had already opened up a six point advantage over the Brits. Belgium followed, with fourth place a tie between Australia, Italy and West Germany.

Race two pitched 250s against 125s. France and Italy put their 125s on the front row, to

great effect in Italy's case as Puzar gated eighth and eventually finished fifth overall despite being ordered to let team-mate Fanton through late on. Up front Diepold holeshot to howls of approval from 30,000 home fans but was quickly deposed by Stanton. The German hung on courageously in a blistering four-way contest involving Pekka Vehkonen, van den Berk and Liles. Fiercely determined 'Bullet' Billy finally forced a way through and Vehkonen, hanging on to the flying Kawasaki, sailed over the bars and out for the day. Farewell Finland!

Van Doorn badly dented Dutch hopes by crashing out on lap two, Aussie Glen Bell retired after aggravating a wrist injury and France faded as Demaria bailed downfield. But the Brits joined in. Whatley, having clawed his way through to 10th from a dismal start, slid off and brought down Kiedrowski. The Yank remounted (despite Jem's best attempts to obstruct him!) and stormed back past Harald Ott and last lap faller Geboers to finish second 125. So with Stanton dominant despite Liles' heroic efforts America had once more won the event overall with one race still to go and an insurmountable 1-1-2-1 scorecard...

Behind them the race was wide open. Italy lay second with Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, France and Sweden boxed in behind. Beneath hot sunshine the track baked into a sleek treacherous 'blue groove' as the 250s and 500s lined up. Lacher grabbed a loudly

hailed holeshot but second row starter Stanton was right there ahead of Jacky Martens, Leisk, Ward, Thorpe and Trampas Parker.

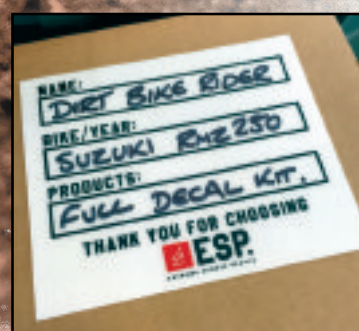
Then they all started making mistakes! Ward went down early. Thorpe, closing on Stanton, did likewise. Leisk tried to shove the recovering Englishman aside and paid the price! Martens, Geboers and Georges Jobe all fell and dropped downfield but Parker, improving all the time aboard a 500 with advice from the watching Kees van der Ven, passed Lacher then attacked and broke Thorpe with what David described as "a peach of a pass". With Trampas top 500 and Fanton fifth 250 the Italians were home and dry in second place, but who had snatched third? Thorpe crossed the line three seconds behind Parker for two points but Whatley was down and out in 19th place and 10th 250 behind fellow fallers Ward, Geboers, Diepold and Jobe!

Scores were hurriedly added up in the British camp but the mathematical confusion was suddenly ended by a booming tannoy requesting the riders of 'USA, Italien and Gross Britanien'. Thorpe's two seconds plus Dobber's fifth and sixth meant the Brits had edged out Luxembourg by one point. The Grand Duchy in turn finished one point ahead of Germany with France sixth, Australia seventh, Sweden eighth, Belgium a lowly ninth and Holland tenth after a rousing day's racing. British Racing Green was back on the box again!

SPROCK

**DAN DISCUSSES
TOOTHED GEARS, CHAINS,
GRAPHICS, BRAKE PADS
AND HOSE, NO, NOT THOSE
HOSE - COOLANT HOSE...**

Words and photos by Dan Grove,
Max Hind and Phactory Phil



ET MAN!

DBR
TESTED



I signed off last month's RM-Z update advising that I'd received a bundle of consumables which was great as the chain and sprockets were due to be replaced. I'd been provided with a JT x-ring chain and JT sprockets and I will admit that I was a little sceptical about using an x-ring chain because of stories around additional drag and the fact that it's slightly wider than a normal chain.

But I'm here to try these things out before relaying that information to you guys so that you don't go and buy something that you're a little unsure about. My concern around the chain width was because I was going through the split links on the previous standard sized chain in quite a quick fashion so with the wider chain I just assumed that I'd be going through them even faster.

To my surprise, I'm quite a few rides now since installing this chain and there isn't even a mark on the split link! To me this just shows the strength of the chain overall as I can't imagine the split link is made any stronger than the actual chain itself. It took maybe three days out on the bike for the chain to stretch to its optimal length and since then it's not needed any adjustment at all.

The accompanying JT sprockets are also looking in great shape with very minimal wear – which is mainly just scratches and the reason I prefer silver sprockets cause after a mud race anodised sprockets look awful! – so

for a £45 chain, £25 rear sprocket and a front sprocket retailing for £11 you'll have a chain and sprocket set that will last you a good while! I'm thinking that my set might last me until the end of the year but I'll report back on that when the time comes.

The JT brake disc/Renthal brake pad combo has been a minor improvement over stock however I've only ridden hardpack tracks since installing them so it's not a direct comparison. I like the front brake to be like a switch and not need much pull on the lever and this combo has given me that. In fact if I pull the lever pushing the bike through the pits the bike will endo! So in these departments the bike is faultless.

I'm still running the richer grey fuel map and everything is mostly plain sailing...or riding. Other additions to the bike this month include a full set of Samco Sport silicone hoses in metallic silver. This isn't a standard colour but you can order this colour for any bike through racebikebits.com and it's one of those things that people don't spot the first time as they're basically the same colour as the engine. The kit I have is also the 'race fit' design that eliminates the 'y' shaped joiner ensuring a smoother flow of coolant compared to the standard hose set up and they're so thick and strong that you can barely squeeze them with your fingers. Some serious quality here and it's no surprise that these hoses grace plenty of MXGP bikes... I also replaced the standard coolant – which I'd never topped up as I'd not lost any since

having the bike – with some Putoline Ice Cooler coolant so that's the cooling system ticked off as being dialled in for the rest of the year on this bike.

The final big change this month – and the most obvious – is a completely new look for the bike. The guys at Only ESP (Extreme Sports People) hooked me up big time as you can see with a Moto Seat seat cover as well as a full graphics kit for the bike that were applied to a complete set of Polisport plastics courtesy of Apico.

ESP have only been in the graphic game a short while but their team boasts some seriously skilled staff and can rival anything out there with printing graphics for everything motocross related. They have colour matched all OEM colours which is awesome for riders wanting their graphics to be same colour as the plastics and they can print onto clear which I didn't take advantage of as I like the swingarm to be a colour to tie the whole kit together. I did go old school with some black rim tapes though!

I'd noticed on the Heads and Threads Suzukis that they don't have the slot in the top of the rad scoop cut out so that was in my request to them as this enables a bigger logo to be applied in this area. Your knees don't rub in this area so there shouldn't be any issues with this wearing through but I'll keep you posted. It's certainly turned a few heads though that's for sure.

**DBR
TESTED**



DOG DAZE!

'MAX'S HUSKY PUP NEEDS A LITTLE LOVIN' BACK AT HQ BUT AFTER A QUICK TICKLE UP SHE'S READY TO ROCK ONCE MORE...





So we are already just about half way through the season – jeez, this year is just flying by. We've already had some pretty cool adventures on board our FC 250 long-termer and I'm sure we've got more to come as we continue to pimp my ride as the year goes on.

One such adventure we had recently was a visit to the Bolddog FMX compound out in the ass-end-of-no-where. Dan Whitby, Samson Eaton and Arran Powley kindly had us over on a pretty brisk Saturday morning – I'd say it was windy but it's always windy in Norfolk – for some dirt bike fun and shenanigans.

I now live in service to Satan himself as I sold my soul to the devil and in return he made sure I wouldn't have to attempt any backflips or hit any super-kickers. It was just a little too windy for anybody to be hitting the big ramps or leaping into foam pits so thankfully I was spared the expected peer pressure and I stayed the right side up!

So instead the guys and I held our own head-to-head tournament around the cool little AX set up they have at the compound. Considering all three of the Bolddog boys were riding big CRF450s my Husky 250 more than held its own. In fact we were all shocked as to just how good she shot out of the blocks and down the start straight. Traction control-less the front wheel was popping and I had Dan Whitby straight up beat in the race for the holeshot – the rest of the race was a different story however.

The more and more I ride our FC 250 the more comfortable I get. I'm starting to really appreciate the smooth yet torquey power delivery whilst also really enjoying the overall agility of the bike. That combo was

absolutely perfect on the tight, slick AX course we were racing on. It's a shame that those boys have more talent in their pinkie nails than I do in the whole of my being because I was quickly eliminated from our tournament! Thanks for the giggles boys!

Not too long after that day our trusty steed was summoned back to Husqvarna HQ in what turned out to be a recall situation. As bad as that may seem it's actually quite nice to see a manufacturer put their hands up and proactively seek to put things right with their machines. My bike is all sorted now and we've been on track since with no problems to be found. So if you have a 2016 FC 250 it might be worth finding out if this recall affects you – and if it does get it sorted ASAP.

As I said we're already just about half way through the season and we've finally got some graphics sorted for the 2016 long-termer – now we're pimping! Once again the guys over at LR Designs hooked us up with a fresh set of stickers to cover up the nakedness of our steed.

Much like our graphics for the 2015 TC 125 we opted for a slightly customised set of Lee's chevron graphics kit which are fully licensed Husqvarna products. I think you'll agree that she now looks pretty damn stunning – even more so than before. As always the service and turnaround from brief, to design to fitment was fantastic and you honestly cannot fault LR Designs in that regard.

You can feel the quality in the graphics and the glue as you stick them onto the plastics; these stickers definitely ain't going anywhere and we know from experience after having a set on our 2015 long-termer that these graphics wear really well and will still look new and fresh by the end of the season.

After fitting these graphics our FC 250 looks brand new again and she's begging to be taken to the track once more – I certainly won't be denying her that...



BACK TO THE FUTURE!

MAX GETS ALL MARTY MCFLY ON US AND GETS READY TO TAKE HIS ANCIENT YZ125 ON AN EXCELLENT ADVENTURE...

Words and photos by Max Hind



MONTH DAY YEAR
JUL 01 2010



It's no secret that people still absolutely freaking love two-strokes and the MX world is full of two-stroke fanatics. Don't believe me? Simply scroll through your social media feeds and you'll notice a wave of good old smoker vids with a bazillion+ views! The two-stroke appetite is still strong and the moto community is going to devour every morsel that they can possibly consume because let's face it; nothing can quite beat the sound of a smoker and the smell of premix in the morning.

My personal love affair with the strokers began at the tender age of eight years old. It was 2003 and my new hero was just emerging on the AMA scene. I watched one of 'The Great Outdoors' movies in absolute awe as a young James 'Bubba' Stewart stormed from dead last to first place onboard his KX125 at the Budds Creek National. It was an insane race, the finest display of two-stroke mastery I have ever seen and it was also the birth of the Bubba scrub. If I'm correct Bubba didn't lose another moto after that for the rest of the season. The sound, the scrubs and the sheer awesomeness of that ride meant that I was hooked on all things two-stroke forever more.

Although, despite the global love and fondness that riders both new and old seem to have for these machines the age of the two-stroke is over and the age of the four-stroke is in full swing. For some strange reason it's only really the Austrian motocross massive in Mattighofen that have continued the development of two-stroke motocross bikes. The Italians at TM have also done a great job in developing two-strokers...

With the Japanese red, yellow and green crews completely dumping smokers altogether that only leaves the Yams to compete with the Europeans. That being said they seem to have taken the KFC philosophy of finding the perfect recipe many moons ago and not changing it since – which isn't really the best philosophy to have in the ever evolving world of dirt bikes. But that KFC philosophy is the exact reason we're putting this feature together...

Back when I was a full-time amateur racer I chose the YZ125 as my first full-sized adult bike. That was way back in 2010 and we've had her in the garage ever since. The YZ125s haven't actually changed that much since 2005 – other than a revamped fork in 2007 – so essentially what we have is a bike that was designed over a decade ago.

The YZ125 has always been a great bike with a lovely chassis and sweet little engine but lately I've been wondering just how

good the YZ could be if big blue had continued to develop the bike. Just imagine if Yamaha had evolved their 125 in the same way that KTM have done with their bike. Let's face it – a 2005 KTM 125 would look and feel very dated nowadays in comparison to the 2017 machine. That's just a testament as to how good the design of the YZ125 was back in 2005.

As we mulled over these facts and thoughts the metaphorical light bulb suddenly sparked. What if we here at DBR towers stepped in where Yamaha left off? What if we could develop the YZ125 I have owned from new? What if we could bring this bike Back to the Future?

Over the next few issues we are going to see if we can take this bike to the next level, bring it to the modern age, build something special and ultimately create the ultimate off road machine because as we all know – 'where we're going we don't need roads!...'

To accomplish this task we've enlisted help from a few different individuals and companies. The first man to step up to the plate is two-stroke supremo and expert tuner Roland Shaw from Hardcore racing. There's not a lot (if anything) Roland doesn't know about two-stroke tuning and he currently looks after a few of the top schoolboy lads such as Harry Kimber (Husqvarna) and Tom Grimshaw (Yamaha) in the 125 class.

The first step in our rejuvenation process was to drop off our tired looking bike at Hardcore Racing so that Roland could strip it down and begin working his magic on the engine and gearbox.

In the next issue we are going to cover some of the wonders that are going on inside Roland's workshop, including a super polish of the gearbox, engine tuning and the impressive vapour cleaning machine that Roland uses to make things look new again.

Stay tuned to see what two-stroke awesomeness we have in store for the YZ over the next few issues of DBR...





APEX IN WORCESTER GETS A SLIGHTLY MIFFED MAX SHAKEDOWN – OOH, THE TERROR...

TRACK ATTACK!

ESSENTIAL INFO!

APEX MOTOCROSS

Location: Junction 6 of the M5, Worcester. WR4 0AA

Length: 1200mm

Prices: Adults £33, kids £25

Contact: 07989 098289

Surface: Woodchip

Shop: Minimal spares

Catering: Burger van

Kids Track: Auto track

Coaching: Training Schools

Toilets/wash block: Yes

Opening times: Sun 10am – 4pm Weds, Thurs, Sat 10am – 3pm

Difficulty: Intermediate

Enjoyment Factor: High

Suitability: Everyone

Session length: 20 minutes

Groups: Three (Expert, Intermediate, Kids)

Handily located in the centre of the country just off the M5, Apex motocross is proclaimed to be the Midlands' premier practice facility. Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays all year round – thanks to its woodchipped soil – Apex has become one of the most frequently visited tracks for the UK's elite and amateur alike. Opening four days per week – and open late every other Wednesday during the summer months – there's really no excuse to miss a day's riding at Apex.

This hillside track has been around for over 30 years in various incarnations, once upon a time Apex was actually a hardpack supercross circuit! However the current management has been in charge for just about nine years now and they have transformed the track into a completely different animal, striving to make the circuit safer with the introduction of woodchips. Over the years these woodchips have been continuously worked into the natural hardpack soil, so today we now have a soft, loamy base around the entire Apex circuit.

In dry conditions the Apex soil is very loose and sandy, forming deep berms for your tyres to really chew in to. In damper conditions the woodchips clump together to form a tackier base with more ruts than berms. As always with woodchip the track can get rough very quickly with the aforementioned berms and ruts as well as big braking bumps.

The unique nature of the Apex soil can be

quite difficult to get used to. I would definitely say that Apex is a fairly peculiar beast to tame and master – that's why you do see some very fast locals who are masters at shredding up Apex!

I'd say Apex is a fairly technical track just in terms of learning how the dirt is going to react. Although in terms of layout the track is fairly simple – and very fun! Making the most of the space available to them, the track team have designed a very fun, fast and flowy layout making use of the hills and building fun and interesting obstacles.

You'll find a few reasonably sized tabletops at Apex and one huge step-up. This step-up is the only obstacle that could throw a spanner in the works for some – she's a big 'un but she can be rolled safely and easily if needs be.

In terms of track care Apex is graded before every ride. It's quite clear to see that the track team are very proud and passionate in this regard. Apex uses a sprinkler system (as well as a traditional bowser) to keep on top of watering during the day.

To keep in line with the high tech sprinkler system Apex also makes use of a high tech traffic light/siren system to aid the marshals they have dotted around the circuit. Essentially these traffic lights are the equivalent of having 11 extra marshals out on track.

In terms of positives and negatives I found it fairly difficult to gel with the peculiar Apex dirt to start with but after a while adjusting to



the conditions that became a problem no more. The mixture of ruts, berms and bumps as well as the big jumps come together to create a great practice facility for all conditions.

Probably the biggest drawback of Apex is the price of admission. £33 is a little more than you may pay elsewhere but where else can boast both sprinkler and traffic light systems? Apex does offer a membership in which you pay £10 to join and thereafter you pay £30 for the day rather than £33 for adults and £25 rather than £28 for kids. As well as this having five stamps on your Apex loyalty cards give you the sixth ride free.

Facilities wise Apex has the bases covered – a hard standing toilet block, burger van and an auto track for the kiddies. As well as this Apex stocks minimal spares for emergencies but nothing too extensive.

Apex is a unique facility that really strives to cater for their customer base in the best ways possible. In my opinion we should have a few more tracks just like Apex dotted around the country. With traffic lights, sprinklers and big jumps Apex is a little slice of the States located just off the M5 near Worcester...

CONCLUSION

Difficulty — a difficult beast to tame

Fun factor — fun and flowy once you get into it

Facilities — fed and watered — what more do you need?

Overall DBR score — truly the Midlands premier motocross facility





Project

DBR PROJECT PILOT JOE CADWALLADER WAS FORCED ONTO THE BACK FOOT AT THE END OF MAY WHEN HE WAS INJURED AT DUNS BUT THE TALENTED TEENAGER HAS MADE GOOD USE OF HIS TIME OUT OF THE SADDLE...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

The month didn't get off to the best of starts for our DBR Project pilot Joe Cadwallader when he picked up a hand injury after crashing at the third round of the Michelin MX Nationals at Duns at the end of May.

This hasn't meant he's spent June with his feet up on the sofa – far from it – and the good news is the 17-year-old is back on a bike and preparing to get back behind the gate on the RMJ Academy FC 250 Husqvarna UK.

We caught up with him at Preston Docks where he was turning laps under the watchful eye of Ash Wilde.

"I cracked a bone in my hand at the MX Nationals round at Duns," he says. "I went over the bars down one of the hills. I didn't have a cast on it but I haven't been able to do anything on the bike for about four weeks so I've had to concentrate on training in the gym."

"I've been keeping up with the interval training on the Watt Bike and doing a lot of strength and conditioning work. I had to start off doing this one-handed but slowly got back into using both. I've been doing a lot of training with Ash which has been quite hard but physically I'm feeling very fit."

"I've come down two kilos in weight. We haven't done any skin folds recently but I'm confident that I'm dropping fat and increasing my lean muscle. My legs are pumping today."

Ash, who dislocated his left shoulder at the Canada Heights round of the Maxxis in April, has had to overcome similar training problems and is impressed with Joe's progress.

"He's doing good," says Ash. "He's had to rest his hand but he's been working really hard on his physical training which hasn't been too badly affected. So for the last three weeks he's been smashing it at Liverpool John Moores University and doing his own stuff at home and getting on top of that."

"He's been getting his legs beasted along with me because obviously I've got an upper-limb injury as well. It's

been about training smart and working around our injuries.

"It's been a big help training together because we've both been struggling with the upper body. It's not made it easier but it's been nice to train and share the leg pain with someone who's got the same thing going on."

"I haven't seen Joe ride in a long time but I can tell straight away from watching him today that his legs are a lot stronger and he's working the bike way more than he was before."

Joe's aiming to return to racing at the fifth round of the Maxxis championship at Leuchars in Scotland on July 3 which means he's got a very busy 10 days ahead of him.

"I've been back on a bike just over a week," adds Joe. "I'm only riding my practise bike at the moment but next week we'll be going out to Holland to get in some time on the race bike and get the suspension dialled."

"We've got BOS suspension which is a new thing from Evo-Tech so Matt Hutchins is coming down to my track tomorrow to do some testing and then we'll head to Holland to try it out in the sand with my mechanic Matty Dixon and the RMJ Pro Academy."

"I can't wait to get back properly riding and racing again. When you're on a bike all the time you get used to it and it feels weird when you're suddenly forced to stop."

Academy head honcho Richard-Mike Jones is optimistic that Joe's progress won't be affected by his injury.

"There's never a good time to pick up an injury – no matter how small – and, obviously, it's been a bit of a setback," he says. "It's all about turning a negative into a positive so we've used Joe's time off the bike to our advantage and really gone to work at the university on his leg strength and conditioning."

"Joe's a very dedicated and committed trainer and I'm confident that he'll bounce back quickly from this minor setback and be ready to return to racing at Leuchars."

DBR will be following Joe and the RMJ Academy Husqvarna every month so stay tuned for further updates...



Compare THE IV

JOHN AND JASON MEARA ARE CURRENTLY KICKING ASS ON THE EMERALD ISLE BUT WHICH ONE OF THE BROTHERS IS BEST? WE SENT IAN CAIRNS TO THEIR HOME IN LOUGHBRICKLAND TO FIND OUT - SIMPLES...

Words and photos by Ian Cairns



FEARAS



DBR: Tell us about your first ever race...

John: "My first race was at Desertmartin when I was eight years old. It didn't turn out to be such a great day. It was very wet and my PW50 would hardly pull me round the track. The clutch burned out in the first race and the second clutch burned out in the second race. I didn't finish any of the races but it was a good laugh. I remember dad taking the clutch out of the PW50 and throwing it as far as he could over the hedge – I think it might still be there in the field actually."

Jason: "They took my bike to the races many times and it sat on the stand all day because I wouldn't ride. Mum and a cousin of mine then bribed me by giving me £10 each to go out for the first time and I never quit from there. My first actual racing memory is going down the start straight at Desertmartin motocross track and the bike was washing all over the place – I didn't know what was going on!"

DBR: And your first success?

John: "It was at a barley stubble race in Moira, County Down when I was eight years old. I had only just started racing – I think it was about my fourth race. As a youth rider, I was pretty successful and I won my first Championship in 2006."

Jason: "It was in the Automatic class at Dundalk when I was seven years old. I got the holeshot and led the race from start to finish."

DBR: What do you do away from the races?

John: "I'm a self-employed plumber."

Jason: "I work as a tiler."

DBR: Do you manage to squeeze any training in around your jobs?

John: "I started training with Eddie Kerr at Pro-Performance Fitness last November time. There's a lot of strength and >>

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conditioning work and we use the gym in Newry Boxing Club. It's tough going but I'm starting to feel the benefits."

Jason: "I started training with Emma McQuaid two years ago. I hadn't really done much training before that and I was always getting a lot of arm pump when I was riding. Now, at the end of the races I seem to be getting stronger so she must be doing something right!"

DBR: Injuries are always a sore subject – have you suffered many?

John: "Oh yes. 2005 – broken leg. 2010 – dislocated and broken shoulder. 2011 – broken T5 and T6 vertebra. 2012 – dislocated shoulder. 2013 – broken leg. 2014 – broken shoulder blade. 2015 – broken wrist. 2016 – broken hand. That's it I think..."

Jason: "I've had quite a few too. I broke both my wrists – my left one twice – collarbone, five ribs, my neck... erm, we'll not go into the rest of the injuries..."

DBR: Who is your motorcycle hero?

John: "My motorcycle hero would have to be Joey Dunlop. I vaguely remember him on the track but I have loads of videos around the house of him. I really admired the charity work that he did. Dad also used to race against Joey and there are a few pictures in the house of them together. He was a great sportsman who did a lot to promote road racing."

Jason: "My hero is Ricky Carmichael for the way he always charged through the field and never gave up – he always gave 100 per cent!"

DBR: What do you do to relax/unwind?

John: "On a Saturday night it's essential to have a good Chinese meal and then chill out with a few mates. Then on a Sunday we try to get to a spa somewhere and chill out in a hot tub or Jacuzzi – that's the best way to unwind!"

Jason: "I'll go home from here today and probably get a cup of tea, put my feet up and put the AMA motocross or something on. Yeah, it's >>>



John races both classes but is more suited to the 450



Jason shows off some fairly recent war wounds



Fully committed to racing 250Fs Jason is in charge of all major MX2 title hunts on the Emerald Isle

JOHN MEARA

Age: 22

Bike: Kawasaki KX250F/KX450F

5 Irish titles, 4 Ulster titles,

Team Ireland member at 2015

Coupe de l'Avenir



always something to do with motorbikes in our house!"

DBR: Would you like to try any other form of motorsport?

John: "I would love to try road racing. I think riding in the TT or North West 200 would give you an unbelievable buzz that nothing else would compare to. Watching the practice session at the NW 200 gave me goose bumps. I reckon my interest stems from my dad doing it in the past."

Jason: "Yeah, well a year and a half ago I tried Supermoto and I ended up doing quite well at it and I really enjoyed it – it was something different. I always wanted to try road racing too because my dad did it but I'm not sure mum and dad would be too keen on this!"

DBR: What advice would you give young people who are interested in racing motocross?

John: "Be prepared to work hard because it's

not easy and it takes over your life. Just never give up, always keep trying. It's an awesome sport when you're at the top but when you get injured it affects your whole life, you just have to pick yourself up and keep going, trying to be the best you can."

DBR: Okay, nobody expects a Spanish inquisition but what is it with you guys and racing in Spain?

Jason: "It all started last year in September when we decided we would go out and spend the winter in Spain training in the better weather. When we were over there at a practice track we found out that the first round of their National championship was the following week so we decided to put in an entry just for a bit of a pre-season race and we ended up qualifying second and had two fifth place finishes. After that we decided to stick with it..."

John: "Our friend Stuart Fee who had been doing them got injured and dropped out so

I thought I'd throw my bike in the van with Jason and head off on the 3000 mile round trip to try it out. And what an experience it was! The results didn't quite reflect the way I can ride – I struggled a lot with the heat and the tracks are totally different to how they are in Ireland. They watered heavily and it grubbed up which brings deep ruts but I got faster as the day went on. I would love to do the last round and think I could make a top 10 finish."

DBR: Any sponsors you'd like to thank?

John: "Norman Watt Motorcycles, Malcolm Rathmell Sports, For Runners by Runners, Pro Performance Fitness, Hogg Furniture, Moto Shox, MBR, thevisorshop.com, Jeff Irwin Car Sales and mum and dad of course."

Jason: "Norman Watt Motorcycles, Michelin, McQuaid Personal Training, Wray Engineering, Motul, BRP Imports, Flow Family Clothing and I'd also like to thank mum and dad and Davy for having the bikes ready for us every week!"

JASON MEARA

Age: 19
Bike: KTM 250 SX-F
7 Irish titles, 4 Ulster titles



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WHITERIOT!



DBR TEST PILOT RYAN HOUGHTON ROCKS OUT AT APEX WITH THE 2017 HUSKYS...

Words by **Ryan Houghton** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

The British summer has only just kicked in and already we're talking about next year's bikes but never mind because I'm always ready for an almighty thrash on some new exotica.

For 2017 Husqvarna has brought some mega machinery to the table in the hope that they might regain some past glory and claim some silverware. The Swedish born brand has undergone many a makeover since it won 250cc and 500cc world titles in the 1960s with bikes ridden by homegrown talents like Torsten Hallman and Rolf Tibblin.

Japanese two-strokes gave them a hammering in the '80s as they ran outdated technology before plugging away with big-bore four-stroke Open classers towards the end of the decade. Their perseverance was rewarded by the man that now heads their MX2 GP team. Belgian Jacky Martens took the establishment apart and won the 1993 500cc crown and essentially altered the course of motocross racing there and then.

Since that moment Husky has been bought, sold, and battered around Europe's motorcycle manufacturers while also winning two 125cc titles with

tiny Italian Alessio Chiodi who took the '98 and '99 seasons by storm on beautifully crafted Italian machines.

Today the brand finds itself intrinsically linked with KTM, sharing most major componentry as well as manufacturing premises. However, it's doing its very best to be individualistic though and in the hands of riders like Max Nagl, Jason Anderson, Max Anstie and Zach Osborne Husqvarna machinery is doing a pretty good job of making a mark on both sides of the motocross pond.

You've only gotta look at the domestic motocross paddocks to see how well sales are doing and that's no surprise when you take a look at the stunners Husqvarna has on offer. At first glance the bikes do look well trick – and I especially love the new white colour scheme. It's really striking and if they wanted to stand out from the crowd then that was a good place to start.

For 2017 the Husqvarna blurb claims 'the motocross line-up is underlined by a commitment to allow riders to maximise their potential in all situations'. If that's their way of saying the bikes are easy to ride then after a day >>





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Photo: R. Schedl



This little switch does amazing things even if track conditions on the day of our test made it a little obsolete...



at Apex in sunny Worcestershire I'm struggling to disagree.

All bikes in the range are light in weight and as powerful as you want them to be. The four-strokes in particular are given some mega boosters like the new engine mapping button. The two options available are interchangeable to suit riders' ability, preferences and current conditions and are ready at the flick of a switch. There's another button for traction control and cosmetic changes like new bar clamps, brake pads and a switch to Dunlop tyres.

The most significant upgrade for me was across the board use of WP AER 48 front forks. Considered by Husky as a 'milestone in the development of their 2017 MX models' the Swedish marque has lobbed out its 4CS conventional forks from this season's models and gone with a 'split-air fork which features a capsuled air spring and pressurised oil chamber for progressive and consistent damping'.

Now, I don't confess to know everything about the science and engineering behind the new WP forks – although I bet they'd rinse all

my prize money to pay for a pair – but with simple clicker adjustments, an extra 10mm travel and friction optimizing tube coating all gift-wrapped with a 1.6kg weight saving then most punters will be chuffed with these babies.

On to the exciting bit – thrashing the nuts of these blue and white beauties. Well I say exciting but I weren't none too chuffed when I sat down to write this while sharing a bed with my mechanic because the hotel we booked only had one bed left. But that's a story for another day...



The FC 250 motor packs an amazing amount of punch



FC 250

The 250 motor produced by Husky for next season is a proper goer. Even after riding a 450 all year I was surprised how fast this 250 was as standard.

The new MX2 beastie throws out 46hp as standard and comes with a nice new upgrade in the form of a mapping switch/traction control switch on the handlebars. You have a choice of two settings with the engine mapping – Setting One is the standard map which is a little more tame, girly, old codgerish mapping while Setting Two is an aggressive mapping which is proper professional, rip your arms off, send you to A&E type map.

I personally preferred the aggressive map but I am in need of lot of power to haul my bloody great frame around the track. Straight away you could feel the difference. Joking aside it genuinely is night and day different. The moment you touch the throttle out of corners the power picks up directly. It also lets the bike rev out on the top-end. When you panic rev it, it has a similar noise to that factory over-rev noise which is pretty sick too!

Another great feature of the mapping switch is that it's so easy to access while riding. If you happen to be racing on a hardpack track and it starts pi*sing down mid-moto you can easily change it to the calm map and potentially save your arse from falling off. I was changing it while jumping – it's as easy as taking off a tear-off.

To throw a little negative out there I must say I wasn't so taken in by the traction control though. If you like to let the rear wheel spin in the corners to make the bike turn then you're knackered because I found that the traction control stopped that a bit. It felt like someone was intervening with your riding and I know that some road bike riders like to call it the anti-fun button! But then again I reckon if you put me on a slippery hardpack track I would sit here and sing its praises.

I'm sure the traction control does have its uses and I definitely wouldn't mind having it at the Maxxis British Championship. Most tracks this year have concrete starts and it could be a huge advantage stopping so much wheel spin when you're trying for a holeshot.



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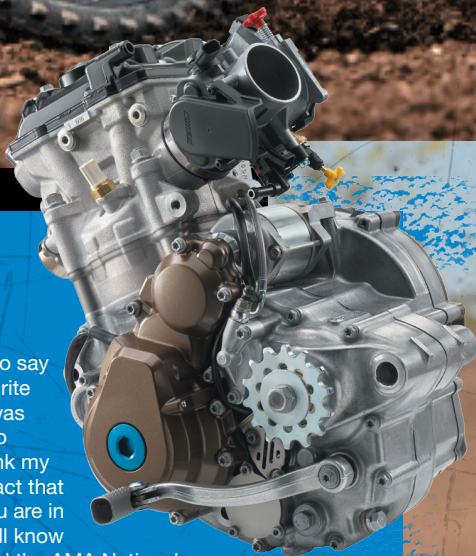


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FC 350

If I've gotta be honest then I have to say the 350 four-stroke is not my favourite bike. I think I said last year that it was my favourite but a man's allowed to change his mind isn't he? I just think my opinion has altered based on the fact that you're either in the 250 class or you are in the 450 class. As race watchers will know even the big boys in Grand Prix and the AMA Nationals who were riding 350s have now switched to the 450.

In racing terms the bigger MX1 bike is just such an advantage off the start. It doesn't matter if you ride a 350 faster during the race because if you start in 20th then you're gonna struggle to get near the front. The bike is still ace to ride and may well be the perfect bike for hobby riders or amateur racers who can't afford to maintain a 250 and aren't too keen on the 450's power.

It all comes down to personal preference because there is very little to choose between the Husky range performance-wise. All of them are extremely light so you have no problems chucking them around and at a fairly hefty 58hp you won't be short of horses to play with on the 350 either.

As I said earlier the biggest and best change is the front forks – the new air forks are definitely a big improvement to the 4CS stuff. As harsh as it sounds the moment I went on the track with the 4CS fork I hated them so it was a relief to me that I had some new gear to test. Better still as I rolled out with the air fork I had a great feeling with them. Result!

Immediately I could push the front end hard into the corners under braking with no problems at all. I also changed the clickers and they seem to be nice and responsive. A few clicks made a big change on the set-up which is a good sign – it's really nice to notice the difference. The rear shock is solid too.



The TC 125 (above) and the FC 350 bring nothing but enjoyment to the track

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What a beast!



FC 450

The FC 450 is a beast of a bike and I'm not really sure if I can convey how good the bike is. I'll get the techie stuff out of the way now because this bike has a slightly different clutch to the smaller models.

The 450 uses a DDS (Dampened Diaphragm Steel) system as opposed to the CSS (Coil Spring Steel) version that can be found on the 250 and 350cc models. Husky say that the clutch is lighter, has better modulation and improved durability.

Now I got on really well with the Magura hydraulic clutch – top of the range gear that stuff – during the test of the test so to have anything that's smoother and lighter on an open class monster is a real benefit to everyone. On that subject actually, it's a pet hate to me that all Japanese crossers don't come with a hydraulic clutch as standard so big ups to Husky for that.

As with the 2016 model range all the four-strokes come with an electric start, are lightweight (just 101.2kg for the 450) and have a pukka Li-Ion battery.

The real selling point of the FC450 is the power plant because it really is immense – proper fast. Husky reckons that the full on MX1 machine is the most powerful bike they've ever produced and seeing as my arms were an inch longer by the end of my session pumping round Apex then I can vouch for every one of those 63 horses.

This white horse don't need a load of whipping because it absolutely flies, straight outta the van, as standard. The beauty of it all for those wimps that are now too scared to buy one is that it weighs next to nothing so you feel like you're on a 250. I was gonna say that the 450 ain't for those with a dicky ticker but I found it so easy to put it exactly where I wanted it in the corners so that's not exactly true.

Just like the rest of the range the 450 has pin point accurate handling. I really like the rear shock on the 2017 bikes too. The shock action worked really well and the best way I can describe it is giving a calm feeling to your riding. Essentially nothing is moving around too much or getting really out of shape which is damn lucky on these weapons.

Basically Husqvarna have made an MX1 machine that professionals and amateurs alike can really get along with.



All the 2017 models handle well and feel light



TC 125

Husky only brought the tiddler two-stroke to the test which is a shame because I would've loved to have had a bash on the 250 smoker. What really made me laugh was that I took a mate down to Apex with me because he really excited about seeing the new TC 250 and that was the only one missing from the fleet. His bubble was well and truly burst!

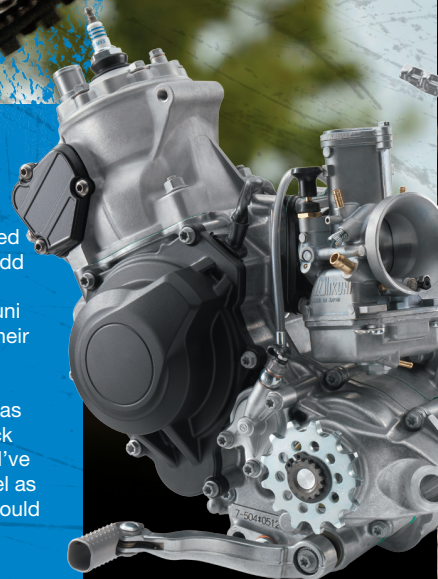
It didn't take me long to forget about the big bike though because the 125 is one tidy little machine. There's no better feeling than ringing the neck of a little two-smoker. We all know they're great bikes to learn on but if you're just looking for some fun then the little Husky will definitely put a smile on your face.

The TC125 felt surprisingly fast considering it had me

on it – and I'm a 90kg lump – so really it shouldn't matter what size you are either. The 125cc has always been a tiny thing but Husqvarna have knocked it down to just over 87kg so this baby would really add some fun and flickaboutability to your weekend.

Husqvarna had changed the carburettor to a Mikuni TMX 38mm flat slide which improves the power of their two-strokes and gives you the user a smoother and more controllable power delivery. Both 125 and 250 two-strokes come with the Magura hydraulic clutch as standard and with the two-stroke scene coming back more and more I would highly recommend the 125. I've no doubt the 250 would be right up to the same level as well. It would only take a head and a pipe and you could go race this bike.

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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



TC 125

Displacement: 124.8cc
Bore and stroke: 54 x 54.5mm
Transmission: 6 gears
Fuel system: Mikuni TMX 38
Front suspension: WP-USD, AER 48
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 375mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 87.4kg



FC 250

Displacement: 249.9cc
Bore and stroke: 78 x 52.3mm
Transmission: 5 gears
Fuel system: Keihin ER – 44mm throttle body
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 370mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 98.8kg



FC 350

Displacement: 349.7cc
Bore and stroke: 88 x 57.5mm
Transmission: 5 gears
Fuel system: Keihin ER – 44mm throttle body
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 370mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 100.4 kg



FC 450

Displacement: 449.9cc
Bore and stroke: 95 x 63.4mm
Transmission: 5 gears
Fuel system: Keihin ER – 44mm throttle body
Rear suspension: WP Monoshock with linkage
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/300mm
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm
Wheel base: 1.485 ± 10mm
Ground clearance: 370mm
Seat height: 960mm
Fuel capacity: 7 litres
Weight: 101.2 kg



Like Ryan is with his roll-offs on already the 2017 Huskys are definitely ready to race



So to sum things up... When I tested the 2016 range I thought all the Husqvarnas were good bikes but now with the 2017 upgrades I believe they've become great bikes and they all come with the Houghton stamp of approval. Honestly, you wouldn't go far wrong with any of the two or four-stroke models on offer and they're definitely worth a look whether you're pro-euro or not. Check me out – I'm even slamming in some politics...



H-BOMB!

HAVING JUST ABOUT SURVIVED THE FALLOUT FROM TWO SEASONS SPENT CHASING VICTORY AT ALL COSTS JEFFREY HERLINGS HAS NOW GOT A NEW OUTLOOK ON RACING - AND LIFE - THAT MIGHT JUST LEAD TO HIM LEAVING A DEVASTATING LEGACY ON THE SPORT OF MOTOCROSS...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

Jeffrey Herlings knows he is good. Sitting down to talk he carries the air of someone who has achieved a lot, talked a lot and is aware he has a name that is often on the lips of motocross fans worldwide.

Two titles, two significant injuries, at least three waves of utter dominance in MX2 and one long-term association with the KTM factory all by the age of 21 means that he has also caught the attention of national press in his native Holland. In short he is a bit of a star and has become used to enquiry about his mentality, health, preferences and personal life.

He has been told since his early teens that he would be the 'saviour' of Dutch motocross. He has been groomed and fast-tracked to the peak of the sport on this 'side of the water' and has fulfilled all expectations and predictions while also showing a sensitive and tempestuous streak. Herlings has grown up in the public eye and under the glare of being a factory rider from his Grand Prix debut at 15 years of age and coped (or sometimes hasn't) with rivalry, jealousy and pettiness.

That's not to say he is cocky. I've done numerous interviews with '84' and there were times when he could come across this way but

it is usually goes hand-in-hand with how his life is faring on the track. We spoke midway through 2015 and he was troubled and not in his usual racing groove – he was almost vulnerable and admitted as much.

Now, in the middle of a perfect season as we go to print – winning some 10 Grands Prix and 19 from 20 motos so far – he is back on easy form. The only difference is that he qualifies some of his more sure-fired remarks with acknowledgement gleaned from his experiences with injury that purple patches can be short-lived.

Let's get one thing clear Jeffrey is a bit different. Adoration and praise (and the pressure that comes with) and subsequent riches from early teenage years are bound to influence a young mind in ways that a great many people on the street cannot relate to. He can be eccentric. Often moving around the paddock in some untidy tracksuit bottoms and still operating from the changing area under the KTM truck compartment despite his lofty status in MXGP. He infrequently uses Instagram (with 150,000 people tagging along) but follows nobody. He only subscribes to Justin Bieber's Twitter feed despite having 26,000 watching him. He is very receptive to fans but is also a bit of a loner. >>





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MXGP As raced by Monster Energy Kawasaki's Tyto Rattray in the 2015 FIM World MXGP series.

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Ask people their opinion of Jeffrey and the responses are likely to vary from adjectives similar to 'genius' to labelling him a 'pussy'. He has proved to be unbeatable and is an absolute wonder in the sand (remember his superiority in lapping almost the entire field at Lierop three years ago?). But he has also admitted to hanging around on a 250 to accumulate statistics and break records and close on the achievement of one-time idol and now nemesis Stefan Everts (more on that later). He has faced little in the way of a challenge since Tommy Searle left the category at the end of 2012.

His injury misery has been compounded by the fact that he was on the edge of two further titles in 2014 and 2015 when disaster struck and this partially explains his reluctance to launch into a new MXGP venture with the confidence levels diminished. People could forgive Herlings for another tilt at a third crown in 2016. The fact is with several years of sizzling form and lap-times on a 250 that would often put him in podium contention in the premier class, motocross followers feel he has outstayed his welcome in MX2. He has already totalled 57 GP wins and overtaken Joel Smets in the all-time list. Who could blame a racer and

Pro athlete for wanting to leave a legacy? He still had to win the races.

For some curious reason he is a loud talker and it is easy to forget that English is not Jeffrey's first language so he can ramble a bit. "Maybe sometimes I say too much or talk too much truth," he says at one point. I ask him not to change. Some of his comments might be slightly raw or make him seem thoughtless and we chat about things that remain off the record, such as the details of a 'win-only' bonus with KTM.

Purveyor of a good sense of humour and quick to swap banter there is the feeling that there is a lot 'going on' with Herlings. Some doubt and insecurity despite all the trappings of success and now a growing profile as one of the most sought-after riders on the scene – it is easy to believe that he could walk into any team in any series if he really wanted to. The challenge as the person sitting opposite him is to try and tap into some of those thoughts or get under those layers...

DBR: One week after Loket last year and that hip dislocation if I said to you that you'd go 10 in a row in 2016 what would your

reaction have been?

JH: "No idea because at that moment I was just over racing. I had been into it since I was a small kid and you have a lot of luck – or things go your way – for so many years and then just for one full year everything goes against you. I experienced some of the worst injuries you can have – breaking a femur (the biggest bone in your body) and dislocating a hip. Man...then almost losing a finger, breaking a collarbone... all in one year.

"When the hip happened I just turned away from racing and took some time for myself. I bought a house and did some things that I'd never done before and also thought about my future. For over three months I wasn't into racing. I could walk again after two months but I didn't train or anything. Then at one point I started to feel better, like I wanted to do something, and started physiotherapy. It went very well. To answer your question I would never had thought of winning races like this. It is pretty good...and pretty special."

DBR: What different things did you do? What things did you discover about life without racing because your lifestyle when competing is pretty >>



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all-consuming isn't it? Were you worried at all?

JH: "I was worried. At that time I didn't really know if I could come back. The broken femur had a bad infection as well so I was really happy it healed but then the hip was also badly damaged. They said I'd need a hip replacement at a young age if the cartilage didn't grow back. The impact I had from [Jordi] Tixier messed it up quite a bit. I was scared for the future and was thinking 'what am I gonna do if I cannot race?'. Everything turned out and luckily I don't have a problem with the hip. It still feels a bit stiff compared to the other one but whether I'm riding, cycling or doing something else it doesn't bother me."

DBR: You went from being the guy who is pretty invincible on the track – apart from that dislocated shoulder in your rookie year in 2010 – and surviving scrapes in Ernee and Valkenswaard to then getting hurt a lot. It's a big contrast...

JH: "Yeah, I had three really solid years. 2014 was good and I had a small crash and missed the GP in Brazil but I was back on the bike after nine days. Then I broke the femur on a mini-bike and it was like 'dude; what are you doing?' I was never in good shape after that but in my head I thought I was."

"The truth is that physically and mentally I wasn't ready for the season [2015] and performing like I thought I would be. It was tough to accept and to come from domination in 2013 where I won all the races I did and nearly did the same in 2014. Then in 2015 I was getting beaten in pre-qualifying or in motos and I couldn't handle it. I just snapped."

"Now if I don't win then I can accept it, like in Italy this year [Ferrandis beat him in the first moto] and I was just happy to go home safe. Things change. I've gotten older, I have a house and I want a good and long career. It is more

important to go home healthy. If it is a bad day and I have fifth in one moto and a win in the other than I'd prefer to have that than go crazy and maybe go down and home injured."

DBR: What were you like when you were injured? A different person?

JH: "The first time yes. I was stressing because I had to be back on the track in eight weeks [to defend his lead in the 2014 championship]. Normally it wasn't an option and with the infection more difficult but we did it. The second time I thought 'I'm just gonna let this heal even if it takes six months or a year'."

DBR: You mentioned doing things you hadn't done before, such as?

JH: "Well, my brother had a child and I was a lot with my niece. She is two and a half now so I'd go there for a play while my brother and his girlfriend worked. I also bought the house and worked on the interiors with the furniture and all the appliances and decoration. It took a lot of time but I had the time."

DBR: Was it quite easy to find the right house?

JH: "I'd been looking for a long time as my parents are divorced and I'd been thinking about it since I was pretty young. I wanted a place for myself and it was also an investment for the future. It was the right time and to step out from my mum. She's the best woman on earth but when you are reaching 21 you want your own place! It took two years to find the house and I just went for it."

DBR: You're pretty good with kids. I see you making the time at races...

JH: "Sometimes I forget and sometimes I remember what it was like to be a kid and have heroes. He might not think it now but Stefan Everts was my hero – Ricky Carmichael and >>





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James Stewart also. I remember thinking as a kid 'why don't these guys make time for me?' Of course you realise now that if there are tens or hundreds of people who want a photo with you then you cannot be there all the time and giving everybody what they want because you also need to focus on the race. When I have the time I try to do as much as possible because that photo meant the world to me. Sometimes I try to put myself in the place I was 10 or 15 years ago."

DBR: On the bike and as a racer you just seem like 'Mr Confidence' so to plummet to those low points it must have then been quite a trip to get back to where you are now – again that guy to beat...

JH: "I might have looked confident last year but on the inside I was eating myself. Every time I went to the start line I was 'man; I ain't gonna win, I'm not fast enough, I'm not fit enough, I haven't ridden enough'. Now I've had a perfect winter and no injuries – just a small twisted ankle that kept me off the bike for five days – and I feel confident. I know that to win a championship I don't have to win every week. If I have a bad weekend and come in third then 'so what?' Nobody will know who won the German GP in 2016 but they will know who won the 2016 championship."

DBR: The Germans will know...

JH: "Okay, maybe the Germans will! But against

the championship it is not important to win the GPs. It is that 'fight and war' saying: I've won many fights in the last few years but not too many wars."

DBR: It has been a curious trip for you. 2010 and a GP debut as a 15 year old, then you turned into this cocky kid with some weird behaviour, then there was the battle with Tommy, then the dominance phase and the injury phase – so what kind of person are you now?

JH: "It feels like I have been through everything! Too young, too much, too quick. It has been six-seven years now. I've had a lot of success and bad luck as well but I think everything is about confidence and experience. With the experience I have now then I know I wouldn't have been injured last year; even a top three or top five sometimes last season would have given me the championship easily. But I thought I had to win. To show the people I was the fastest all the time. That's what 'killed me'."

"Now I go to a GP just hoping to do my best. I've been in serious pain twice and had enough surgeries. I don't care what people think any more. If Ferrandis beats me in a moto then fair enough – let him be happy. I want that championship and to do what I get paid for. I will try to do it in the best way...and the safest."

DBR: Without getting too soppy you're actually quite a sensitive guy aren't you? We've seen the

tears flowing more than once and some angry post-race reactions as well on TV...

JH: "I get mad or pissed off when people just do stupid things [in reference to his outburst on TV at the German GP this year]. This sport is already dangerous enough so why cut people off at the start? Are they jealous about me winning? Then just train harder and beat me straight up like a man. Don't play it that way. I try to work on that emotional side and put it away but sometimes it comes out. On the outside it can look worse than it is! I'm still a racer and I race with my heart and because I love it. I guess sometimes it is not always good to say the truth or what you want to really say. Well, sometimes....especially for a journalist because he can keep on writing stuff."

DBR: Okay, on that note, tell me about Stefan Everts. It seems like a bizarre relationship. You idolised him, worked with him and now there is animosity. What happened?

JH: "To me, it is like he saw me as a guy that could potentially break his records or be better than him or whatever. He would tell me not to ride the bike in the winter and that I should rest for three months when I didn't want to. He let me go to a shop and spend 8000 euros on a new bike instead of wanting to help. Things like that made me think 'why?'."

"When I broke my femur at his race [Everts and Friends Charity Event] I tried to call him a couple of times. He never came and visited or >>>

Herlings celebrates equalling Joel Smets epic number of GP wins



BOMB



helped me to feel better or with doctors to heal better or quicker. The crash was my fault but I didn't get any support afterwards and that hurt me.

"There were some other moments as well where I was disappointed. As a racer he was one of the best of all-time but on the human side...it was weird. He was my hero as a racer and I still have so much respect for what he did in his career and what he did for motorsport but as a person and towards me – I don't know – I cannot find too many positive things to say."

DBR: Back to your state of esteem – from a position of uncertainty in 2015 you must be happier now...

JH: "Yeah...there are guys today who can possibly beat me and who have a lot of speed. I'm fit and I feel good with the bike and like everything is on a roll right now. You cannot have 36 motos where you have a good start and just check-out. But I feel confident and I want to finally get that championship..."

DBR: But as the GPs roll on then you are getting close to a special distinction...Stefan didn't go undefeated, he missed it by one in 2006...

JH: "No, he didn't but Ricky and James did... but going undefeated is something that I think is too difficult here in GPs. They [the Americans] have 24 motos and we have 36 – we have one third more. Their weather conditions are normally the same and the tracks are watered and prime. Here in Europe we might to Trento where it is small, narrow and one-liner and you can be three seconds faster than someone but if you don't start then you cannot win and then we go somewhere like Lommel! Maybe one day it is possible but it will be damn hard."

DBR: You're only 21 but does your body tell you otherwise?

JH: "Oh yeah. I've been tough on my body and sometimes sitting on the couch I can feel it. I don't even know where to start but I think the injuries that come and go also have an impact. I might have dislocated a hip but I also punctured my lung in my first year on the big bikes and sometimes I still have a problem with it and can get sick quickly. Things can sometimes accumulate so you have to keep the list of injuries as small as possible! I think everybody has had some big things. Stefan was out two years in a row and Ricky as well and they are some of the best in the sport."

DBR: Assuming you have a pretty good bonus scheme, if you have a couple more seasons

like now can you go on holiday for a long time?

JH: "[smiles] It depends on how much you spend!"

DBR: Are you sensible with money though?

JH: "I've seen a lot of people come and go... I know how expensive life can be, especially now that I live by myself. I know that if you want to retire by 25 or 30 then you need a lot of money in the bank. Many people like watches, expensive shoes or cars and they are material things that I don't really care about. Buying a new car for 100,000 grand when it's worth 70 the year after is just wasting money. I really don't want to waste because my parents had literally almost nothing and the time when I signed for KTM they were virtually broke. I know how hard it was for them to make a living every month."

DBR: At least you don't have to buy clothes...

JH: "That's right DC hooks me up pretty good!"

DBR: So, it's June. And I figure you have a year, maybe nine months, before you seriously have to think about 2018 and the end of your KTM contract. Considering your age, what you've won and what you could do then you must be considered one of the most bankable athletes on the scene so there will be a lot of thinking ahead. You'll have to consider your market value and Pit [Beirer, KTM Sport Director] is going to have to come up with some big numbers...

JH: "It all depends on results you know..."

DBR: You're not doing too badly there...

JH: "That's right! But that's what it comes down to. I had a contract from 2009 until 2013, then another two years and then two years more. I've always just renewed and never really explored negotiations with another brand because I knew I was going to be in MX2 and the KTM was one of – if not 'the' – best bikes in the world championship. In my personal opinion KTM is number one. In MXGP there are more brands and manufacturers that are closer to each other. It could be interesting but there is still a lot of time to think about it and finally be in a position to look around properly. Or maybe I will just sign with KTM nice and early."

DBR: Pit has said that he enjoys the challenge of dealing with you but the next contract has the potential to be huge. Have you thought about getting help with that?

JH: "I've never worked with a manager to be honest."

DBR: Is that a trust thing?

JH: "Also...but when I make a deal I want to get the most out of it for myself as a racer. What more could a manager get out of it? Only something for themselves. I don't know a manager's rates but I've been doing it by myself up until now. Maybe I could have got more – I don't know – but I'm happy with what I have and I'm really happy with how KTM have been treating me."

DBR: So, to put you on the spot... I'm Pit Beirer and I have a contract here in front of you. What does your heart say?

JH: "Erm, you mean for 2018-2019? Now it is too early to talk about that and too many things can still change. Maybe a manufacturer comes up with a bike that is much better than someone else's and as a rider you might want to be able to negotiate with them. Or maybe KTM come up with one."

DBR: The rumour is that Stefan Pierer [KTM CEO] won't even let you go on a Husqvarna...

JH: "It's true. I had an option to go there but he told me he wants me on a KTM."

DBR: Lastly, you live in this bubble of training and racing and I just wondered if you have any concept of how people around the world see you and the things you are achieving. I always say that people have to see Herlings ride the sand. That regard and high esteem – are you aware of any of that?

JH: "People talk about the sand and when I hear those nice words I just get this really nice smile that I cannot avoid. People say that seeing me riding on the sand is something special but I don't really know too much about it – I'm just out there doing it and it feels like a daily job."

DBR: Well, forget about the sand how about all the wins and the position of dominance unlike any other athlete in any other class in motocross...

JH: "It's very cool but you know – everything in life is temporary. In 10 years from now there will be another kid. Recently it has been Herlings, Roczen and 10 years ago it was only Stewart. We passed through Vilopoto and into Dungey. It is nice to feel like you are the king but I also know about the other side and having people doubt you: Can he come back? Can he be as fast as before? Isn't he broken mentally? All those things. I know about being the king and the next day going from hero to zero. It's the sport. It's like with Bubba now and everyone saying he's 'done'. They forget how talented he is and what he can do. That's what racing is like."



HOW A KNEE INJURY IS MAKING
DANNY MCCANNEY'S FIGHT WITH
THE ENDUROGP ELITE SO MUCH
TOUGHER THAN IT NEEDS TO BE...

THE



Words and photos by Future7Media

f it weren't for bad luck during the last six months or so the McCanney brothers – Jamie and Danny – wouldn't have had any luck at all. Injuries, injuries and more injuries have done their best to derail younger brother Jamie's season to date while things haven't been much better for Danny.

Truth is 2016 has been anything but kind to Danny – Rockstar Energy Husqvarna's #1 250F mounted rider. Enjoying a strong start to his first year as a senior class racer in the Enduro 1 class last year, a serious knee injury ensured a slow, painful and anything but positive end to his first year out of the junior ranks.

From Enduro Junior champion in 2014 to up and coming new-kid-on-the-block in E1 last year, with his two-year Husky deal up at the end of this season Danny's found out first hand just how quickly fortunes can change as a professional racer. To date 2016 has gone from bad to worse and only now – with the end of this year's Enduro World Championship already on the horizon – is the Manxman returning to the type of form that he knows he's capable of producing. The kind of form that will earn him a top level ride for 2017.

"If I can start finishing on the podium regularly I know that I'll start to relax into things and then do better," admits Danny, fully acknowledging that only now is he starting to find his feet again following knee surgery. "It's hard coming back from a serious injury like I had with my knee. There's always pressure to perform but when you know you're not riding like you can you start to worry about stuff. Every rider knows they ride at their best when they're relaxed and not really thinking about things. I've not really been able to do that yet this season."

Danny's problems started back in June of last year. Seemingly headed to a solid first year in the Enduro 1

class, a knee injury at the GP of Italy was when the rot set in. "I snapped my ACL and tore my meniscus but initially I was told I just had some bruising. There were some rolling whoops in one of the tests and I put my foot down – it went under the bike and straight away and I knew something was wrong.

"That was in Italy at the end of June last year. I had to race the next round in Belgium with my knee how it was and then I got a small operation to clean it out to get the movement back again. I was off a bike for a few weeks, then I fell while practicing and needed to get my knee drained because it filled up with fluid. So I headed to the final round in France anything but well prepared."

Danny ultimately fell just short of his goal of finishing third behind Eero Remes and Christophe Nambotin and was just edged out by Spaniard Lorenzo Santolino. Jeopardising his 2017 season, or certainly the start of it, in order to try and put the finishing touches to what had been a very promising season seemed like the right thing to do at the time.

"It was a difficult decision to make – basically I had to decide between giving up on fighting for third in the Enduro 1 championship and get the operation I needed or waiting until the end of the year and carrying on doing all I could to get a top three result. I decided to keep racing and although things didn't work out how I hoped they would I still think it was the correct thing to do. It just meant that my 2016 season was somewhat compromised."

Knowing that he was under prepared Danny lined up for the start of the first EnduroGP event of 2017 under no illusions that he'd be fighting for wins. Securing points, not aggravating his knee and generally getting to the end of what would turn out to be a tough old event were the goals.

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Danny's knee isn't such a problem in the dry but dry GPs have been a rarity in the 2016 season so far



"I just wanted to finish in Morocco and get as many points as I could," explains Danny. "I really didn't expect much at all. I knew I was underprepared and that I wasn't going to be anywhere near my best physically. But it went okay. Finishing sixth and fifth wasn't too bad. It's nothing to shout about but in terms of points and feeling okay back on a bike in a race situation, I was pleased with things."

But it was a case of one step forwards and two steps backwards for Danny's confidence as dust was replaced by mud at the GP of Portugal. Wanting to build on his first round performance, instead of coming away from round two having once again moved things in the right direction, he headed back to the Isle of Man little more than frustrated.

"I really hoped that Portugal was going to be a dry race. I'd come through the Morocco event without problems but as soon as it started raining in Portugal I started to think about my knee again – about not wanting to do anything to aggravate it. Not wanting to re-injure it. It wasn't a good race for me but I managed to get through it without getting hurt, so although I wasn't exactly made up with my results I was fairly positive and looking forward to Greece."

It's an understatement to say that things didn't go well in Greece. With more mud came another disappointing result and arguably one of the most disappointing performances of his career.

"Greece was a disaster," admits Danny openly, looking back at the event in which he failed spectacularly to get up one hill in spectacular style. "I was headed for a podium finish on the first day but then made the biggest mistake I've ever made in a world championship event – in any event, probably. I messed up a slippery uphill, got stuck and generally made a complete mess of things."





Danny's out of contract at the end of this year so needs strong results to retain his factory rider status



"I ended up taking my mud-covered gloves off which made things even worse and just couldn't get up this hill. I honestly thought I was going to have to leave the bike on that hill and walk to the finish. It was a disaster. On the Sunday things were better but I just wanted to get the hell out of Greece. I was so disappointed that I'd not managed to get on the podium."

Thankfully, finally things turned a corner for Danny in Finland. Still a long, long way from delivering the pace he wants and needs to, he finally cracked the top three in E1 – a result that felt like a win.

"Finland's been a turning point, for sure.



Looking back I should have been on the podium on both days but I made a dog's dinner of the Super Test on the Friday night which affected my result on Saturday. But to get third on the second day – and a decent enough overall result – it felt like I'd won the GP. There's room for improvement, a lot of improvement but I want to end the year being on the podium at each race. And getting closer to Nathan and Eero."

In Sweden things again went well for Danny. Sharing the final step of the podium with his team-mate Pascal Rauchenecker, he not only completed another GP without aggravating his knee he also again placed on the podium.



But Danny needs to impress. With the first task of returning to the podium now completed, next up is to close the gap on E1 class front-runners Remes and Watson. If that goes well the next step is to secure a ride for 2017 and beyond.

"I want to reduce the gap to Eero and Nathan and be knocking on the door for a top 10 in EnduroGP," explains Danny. "I need to be finishing inside the top 10 and I know I can. The next two rounds in Spain and Italy will be here and gone in no time at all, leaving just the final round in France. I need to start showing what I know I can do... I just hope that we've seen the last of the mud this year."



DANNY ON...

THE ISDE

"I'm looking forward to the Six Days. I think we have a strong team so we should be able to do well if everything works out. Together with Jamie, Nathan and David we should be able to do okay. I'm switching back to a 300cc two-stroke which I'm looking forward to. For me the race comes too late in terms of securing or renewing a deal for 2017 but getting some racing time under my belt will be good. Switching bikes will also refresh my motivation and give me something else to work towards."

ENDUROGP

"Like all riders I hope that it will be the right move to reduce the number of classes and put more emphasis onto the overall result. It will simplify things and hopefully move things forward. It will help some riders and manufacturers but what no one knows is what will it do to other riders and possibly some of the smaller teams."

BROTHER JAMIE

"Jamie was ready for this season but within two weeks of switching to Yamaha he hurt himself. It was a small, small fall but it resulted in a broken collarbone. That left him no time to get ready or test but he felt really comfortable on his bike and got some decent results. It's a shame that he then broke his foot in Greece."

STEVE HOLCOMBE

"Steve's really upped his game and is obviously really comfortable on his bike and working hard to get the great results he's getting. Switching from one team to another but staying on the same bike is a perfect situation to be in. He's working hard and deserves the results he's getting."

JANE DANIELS

"Jane has really surprised a lot of people. I guess I expected Laia to carry on where she's been – which is at the top. I was surprised when I heard Jane had won both days in Finland but she's got a good lot of experience now and is obviously riding well. I'm really happy for her. She knows she can do it now. It's really good to see her doing well."





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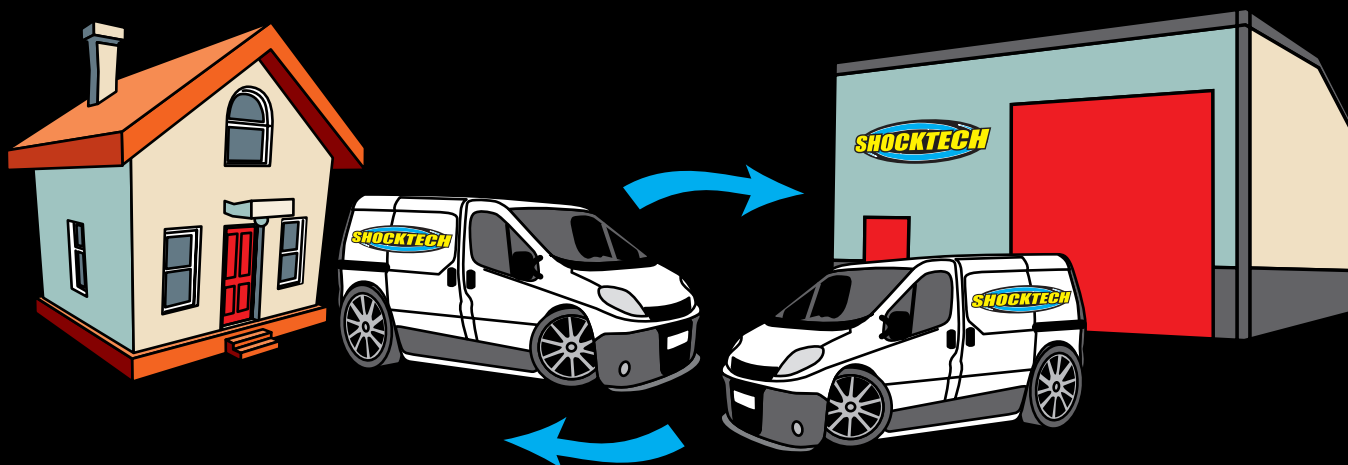
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NORTHERN LITES!

Taking a recap of MXY2 action so far Apico Husqvarna runner Alexander Brown dominated the opening two rounds of the series with three moto wins from four before picking up an injury at the Pontrilas stop of the MX Nationals. Out for the next two rounds Brown returns on home soil looking to pick up where he left off but now finds himself 78 points off top spot.

Talking of the top spot that belongs to Jamie Carpenter and his Holeshott MX KTM. More than solid shows from Carpenter through rounds one and two always suggested he could take a moto win or more but after changing colours

BEFORE THE 250F YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP - THAT ISN'T A CHAMPIONSHIP - HEADS NORTH OF THE BORDER FOR ROUND FIVE WE CHECK IN ON WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR...

from Honda red to KTM orange and with Brown sidelined, JC absolutely bombed it. Three moto wins and one runner-up finish from the next two rounds delivered overall wins at Hawkstone and Desertmartin and a 37 point "cough" championship "cough" lead.

Behind red plate holder Carpenter it's all pretty tight as Henry Williams is narrowly fending off Michael Ellis, Dexter Douglas and George Grigg Pettitt. Just 11 points cover those four amigos and with Zander Brown sitting sixth in the standings there could be major movements once the dust settles in Fife.



Dexter Douglas is rising through the MXY2 ranks



James Carpenter leads the series headed into round five at Leuchars

MAXXIS MXY2 SERIES STANDINGS

- 1 James Carpenter 175, 2 Henry Williams 138,
- 3 Michael Ellis 132, 4 Dexter Douglas 129,
- 5 George Grigg Pettitt 127,
- 6 Alexander Brown 97

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Lewis Hall is the sole Brit to qualify for the European finals at Loket



Eddie Jay Wade has been on fire in the Spanish Nationals

EURO FIGHTERS!

HALL'S ROAD TO LOKET AND EDDIE JAY WADE'S NEAR MISS...

In recent years with the likes of Conrad Mewse, Albie Wilkie and Jack Bintliffe all nailing superb results we've kinda got used to seeing British youth talent top the Euro box. Following the 2016 EMX 85cc qualifiers – and with the finals taking place at Loket on July 23/24 – all this year's hopes are now resting with Team Green's Lewis Hall.

Up until his final rounds it was also looking bright for Spanish based Husqvarna pilot Eddie Jay Wade – ultimately luck wasn't on his side though. With the qualification process split into geographical zones, Hall finished fifth overall in the North West European zone, a section this year dominated by Nordic KTM riders.

Up against the best of the Italians, Spanish, French, Swiss, Slovenians and Austrians – and with the odd Russian chucked in – EJW went at it the South West Euro section. After missing the opening round due to a date clash with the opening round of the British Youth Nationals Wade started on the back foot and his debut in Italy didn't exactly go to plan either. With a couple of crashes to deal with running a 14-10 for ninth overall wasn't a great start but setting cracking lap times EJW knew he had the speed.

After leading both motos in Slovenia an outstanding 2-2 result put him on the podium as runner-up and also moved him up to seventh

in the standings. Heading off to Portugal full of confidence for his final round EJW was on top form again.

However, when leading moto one with a 10 second advantage disaster struck. Taken out by a backmarker cutting across him over a jump a broken collarbone and an 11th place finish in the final group standings resulted. A cruel way to end his Euro campaign...

Rage asked Kawasaki flier Lewis Hall for a few thoughts on his qualification experience.

Rage: Congratulations on a great show all through your five rounds of qualification. Just to remind you. It all kicked off in Denmark, Slovakia was next, then in Holland you had a great third place finish in heat two. On to Germany, and then finishing in Finland with a fourth place result in the section closer. Quite a road trip that! Which was the toughest round?

LH: "Slagelse in Denmark was probably the toughest round for me. It was the first round and I didn't really know how I would get on, I went well in the qualifying race though and finished fourth. When it came to the points races I was feeling quite nervous but I kept my head and went 10-7. I struggled with my starts all weekend but I knew I had something to build from."

Rage: How about your favourite round then?

LH: "Slovakia was my favourite round. The track was unreal and there was glorious sunshine. In the races I went 5-6 with decent starts and enjoyed some hard battles!"

Rage: Looking at the guys you were up against – who impressed you the most?

LH: "All the riders are really fast over there but the winner Emil Jönrup (Sweden), runner-up Rasmus Pedersen (Denmark), Matias Vesterinen (Finland) and Anton Nagy (Sweden) are definitely the fastest."

Rage: What do you know about the finals circuit at Loket and have you set a benchmark you will be happy with?

LH: "I've only ever seen Loket on television and YouTube and I've been watching helmet camera videos of the track to try and work out what sort of dirt it is. I've heard it's hardpack and very stony. From now until the final I'm going to be training really hard on and off the bike and hoping for top five results! I just want to say a huge thanks to everyone at Kawasaki Motors UK for all their great support! And thanks to all the other great sponsors helping me out!"

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SPOTLIGHT ON...

JAYGO BEASTY #262

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Up until quite recently the only facts that I knew about Jaygo Beasty were that he has an awesomely unforgettable name and in his Auto days he was one of the leading contenders.

In 2013 following a season battling away in the British top six at 50cc level he finished third at MX Masterkids in France but in the following couple of seasons he had a terrible time with injury on 65s. This year he's making a good fist of it in his rookie SW85 season but there's also something quite extraordinary happening in Jaygo's world as he's going for an FMX world first at the end of July!

If he pulls it off Jaygo will be the youngest ever rider to complete a backflip on an 85cc machine. Before a long road trip to the Czech Republic for an annual FMX event out there, Rage sat down with Jaygo and dad Dom to discuss...

Rage: How or why did you become so interested in freestyle?

JB: "I used to love watching Red Bull X-Fighters and I still do. It all started when I was younger around the time I started racing at six. I've always enjoyed the big jumps and trying different tricks and it's all really progressed from there."

Rage: Dom, give me the lowdown on Jaygo's journey into freestyle from your point of view...

DB: "At just six Jaygo announced that he wanted to be the world's youngest person to backflip a motorbike and we do everything we can to support

him. We built a foam pit and by the age of 8 we believe Jay was the youngest person in the world to backflip a full sized BMX to a hard landing although Guinness don't record this as a record as they no longer recognise 'worlds youngest' type records.

"For the last couple of years we've been trying to get in contact with someone who could help train Jay but who also has the right training equipment to make sure he was safe. Aimee at Arenacross has been a huge help and arranged for us to meet with Petr Pilat at one of the arenacross events.

"He very kindly offered to give Jaygo some personal training after being impressed with his bike skills. We've cancelled our dream holiday and made a number of sacrifices to create a training facility at home that will enable Jaygo to develop his skills in a relatively safe environment. At present however we don't have anyone local to us who can help with training so it tends to be a lot of trial and error and hard work."

Rage: Who are the stars of freestyle you admire most Jaygo and why?

JB: "My all-time favourite has to be Travis Pastrana. From the first time I saw him in X Games right up until now he's always pushing what's possible on a bike. Also Petr Pilat he's been a huge inspiration and help to me."

Rage: Who currently has the record for the youngest backflip on an 85 then? And at what

age did they do it?

DB: "Tyrone Gilks and Luc Ackerman both flipped 85cc bikes at 12 years old but no one else around that age has ever been recorded. Jaygo only just turned twelve on June 26."

Rage: How is the training for the big event going?

DB: "Jaygo really struggled to land his first flips into the foam pit – this is basically being launched 4.5 metres off the top of a super kicker, hanging on to the bike and nailing the full rotation. A series of crashes didn't deter him though and on the final day he nailed 10 flips in a row which Petr described as perfect. Since we returned home we've had a number of challenges which have slowed progress but Jay's hoping to nail his flip at our training compound before we go out to Prague for the festival event."

Rage: How did the festival invite come about then? And how do you hope the future pans out?

DB: "Following our training with Petr in Prague he was so impressed with Jay's skills for his age that he invited him back to take part in his annual July FMX event. Taking Jay's bike and spares we will drive there a few days before the event. As Jaygo loves both motocross and FMX he wants to continue to develop his skills in both activities but on the freestyle front the next step is to try and get involved in some UK FMX events to get his name out there and help him develop."

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